

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

fall 1978

Special Issue:  
Carleton E. Watkins, Pioneer Photographer



THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, works to preserve the historical source materials which build cultural understanding; to serve as a clearing house for scholarship which extends historical knowledge; and, by presenting to the public historical publications, programs, and services, to enable people to examine, evaluate, and question the traditions that shape their lives in California today. All are invited to join.

Published continuously by the Society since 1922, *California History* is the only magazine exclusively devoted to California's history from pre-Columbian to modern times. Illustrated articles, pictorial essays, and book reviews explore the state's social, economic, political, intellectual, ethnic, and aesthetic heritage, encouraging examination of the interplay between the past and present.

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#### COVER

Pioneer California photographer Carleton E. Watkins documented the landscape of the American West, mastering the exacting photographic processes and bringing his artistic vision to the infant art. In this special issue of *California History*, articles and photographic essays by Watkins scholars investigate the uniqueness of Watkins' contribution to the historical record and the shadowy career of the man who in 1861 made this unusual self-portrait titled *Under the Upper Falls, Yosemite*. Stereograph no. 72. *California Historical Society Library*.

# California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

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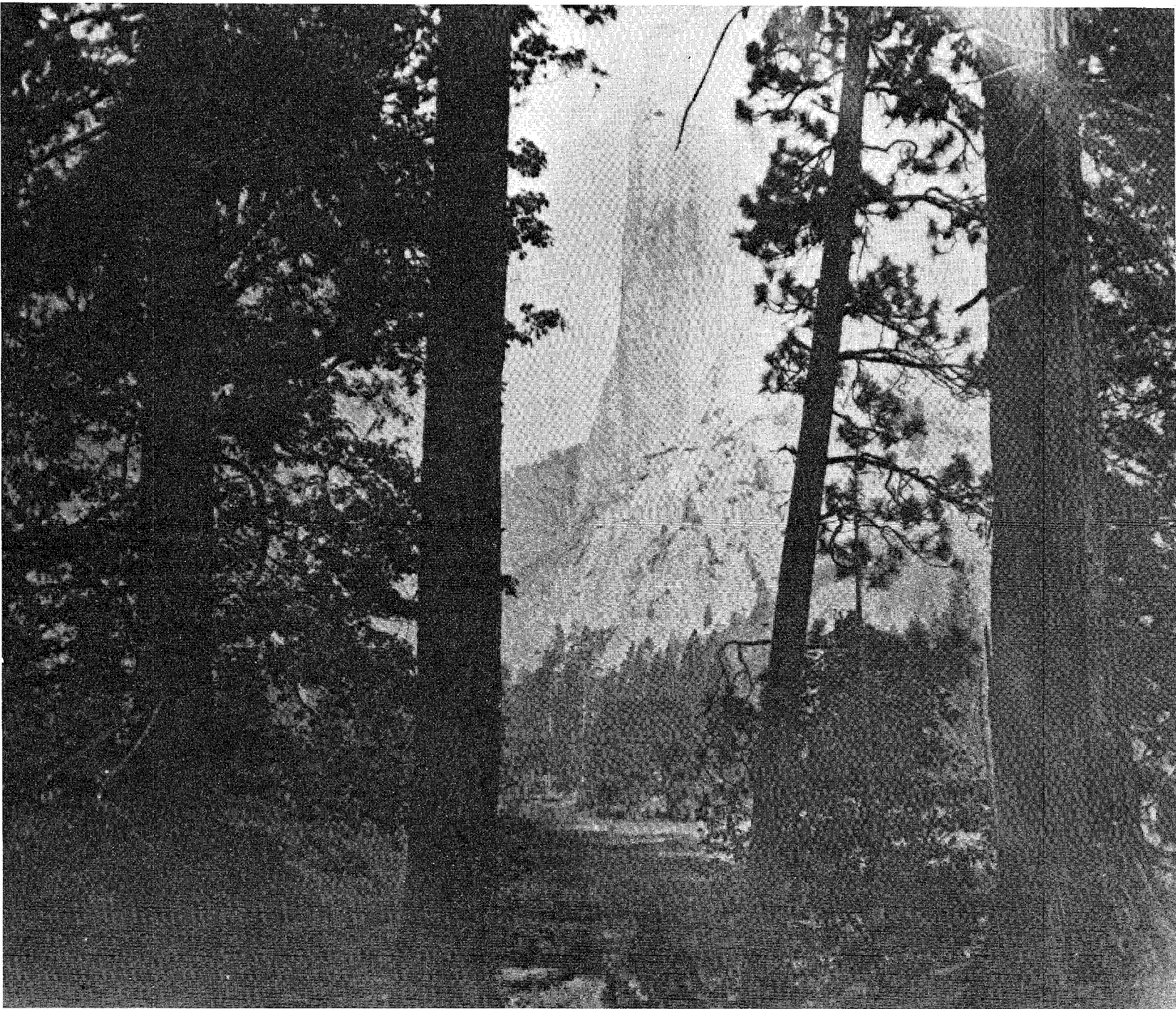
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El Capitan, 3600 Feet. *In Watkins' developing landscape vision, tree trunks emphasized the picture plane rather than serving as traditional landscape elements.* Baird Collection #44.



# CARLETON E. WATKINS

## Pioneer Photographer

Carleton Emmons Watkins is known primarily for his western landscape photographs taken in the 1860's and 1870's, particularly his views of the Yosemite Valley. As a photographer he visually elaborated on the widely held nineteenth-century belief that nature embodied God's divine order. His photographs emphasized the harmonious relationships of elements in nature, the awesome grandeur of the mountain valley, and the pristine quality of wilderness untouched by civilization.

Watkins' photographs also provided compelling evidence that the American wilderness was a national treasure, portions of which deserved to be preserved in their natural state. Partly through the sentiment raised by his widely distributed pictures of Yosemite, the valley was declared by Congress in 1864 to be inviolate and under the protection of the state of California, leading the way for the establishment of the country's national park system.

Watkins also participated in the exploration and further documentation of the western wilderness areas by accompanying the United States Geological Survey teams which charted the terrain of Northern California. In 1864 he traveled with J. D. Whitney, Clarence King, James T. Gardner, and William Brewer in Yosemite. Engravings made from Watkins' photographs illustrated the preliminary survey report of 1865, and Watkins included the map prepared by King and Gardner in his own view albums. Watkins made another series of Yosemite views for Whitney's final report of 1868 titled *The Yosemite Book*, and in 1870 Watkins again worked for King on a survey trip into the Mount Shasta-Mount Lassen area. On his own in 1867, Watkins set out to

take the first extensive series of photographs of the Columbia River region of Oregon.

In addition to photographing California and the West as seen by its first white settlers, Watkins photographed the new California: the rapidly growing cities, the mines and miners, the shipping activities, the railroads. He also provided images of the new elite and the homes and gathering places which mirrored their aristocratic pretensions. To all of these non-landscape views which were sold to proud owners, tourists, and new settlers, Watkins applied his best art and best technology.

Often, quite ordinary subjects gained in stature by Watkins' formal compositional approach toward photography. Emphasizing the relationships of abstract elements, he excluded unimportant details in carrying out his abiding sense of balance, order, and harmony. The consistency of his style both in his pure landscapes and in his more commercial views reflected in part the dual outlook of his day that honored equally technological progress and untamed nature. Watkins' pictures also tended to be formal because of the length of time required by the steps of wet-plate photography, by the need to present his commissioned views in the best light, and by his inherent predilection for creating a world of order and dignity within his picture frame. His sense of history and his sense of artistry strongly complemented each other, and today his pictures remain as beautiful and historic records of the past.

The California Historical Society Library holds some 800 photographs from various periods of Watkins' career. It is hoped that the focus on Watkins in this issue of *California History* will encourage greater awareness of this pioneer's work as a visual source of knowledge about California's past.





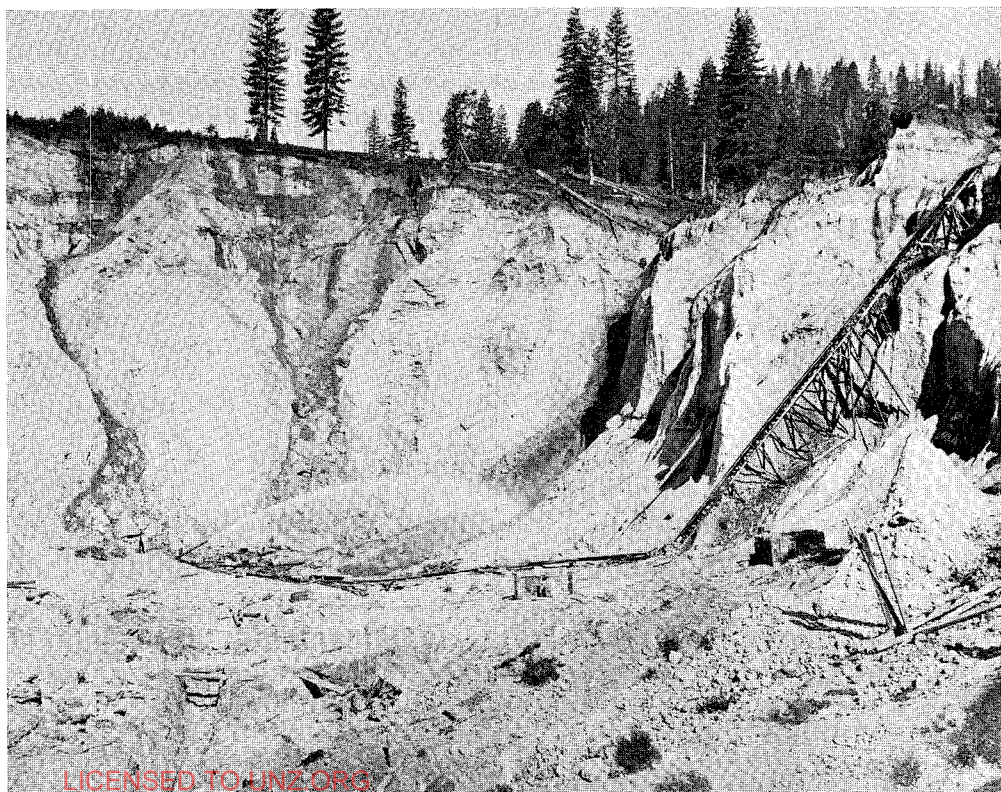




Camp Bed on Lassen's Butte, Siskiyou County (no. 1567). Crude lean-tos like this sometimes sheltered Watkins and other members of Clarence King's Fortieth Parallel Survey Party.

Williamsonii—Mt. Shasta. Watkins made this unusual view of the great peak in 1870 (left).

Malakoff Diggins, North Bloomfield Gravel Mines, Nevada County. Watkins' 1871 mammoth-plate views of mining received rave reviews for their "lifelike representation of hydraulic mining . . . on paper."

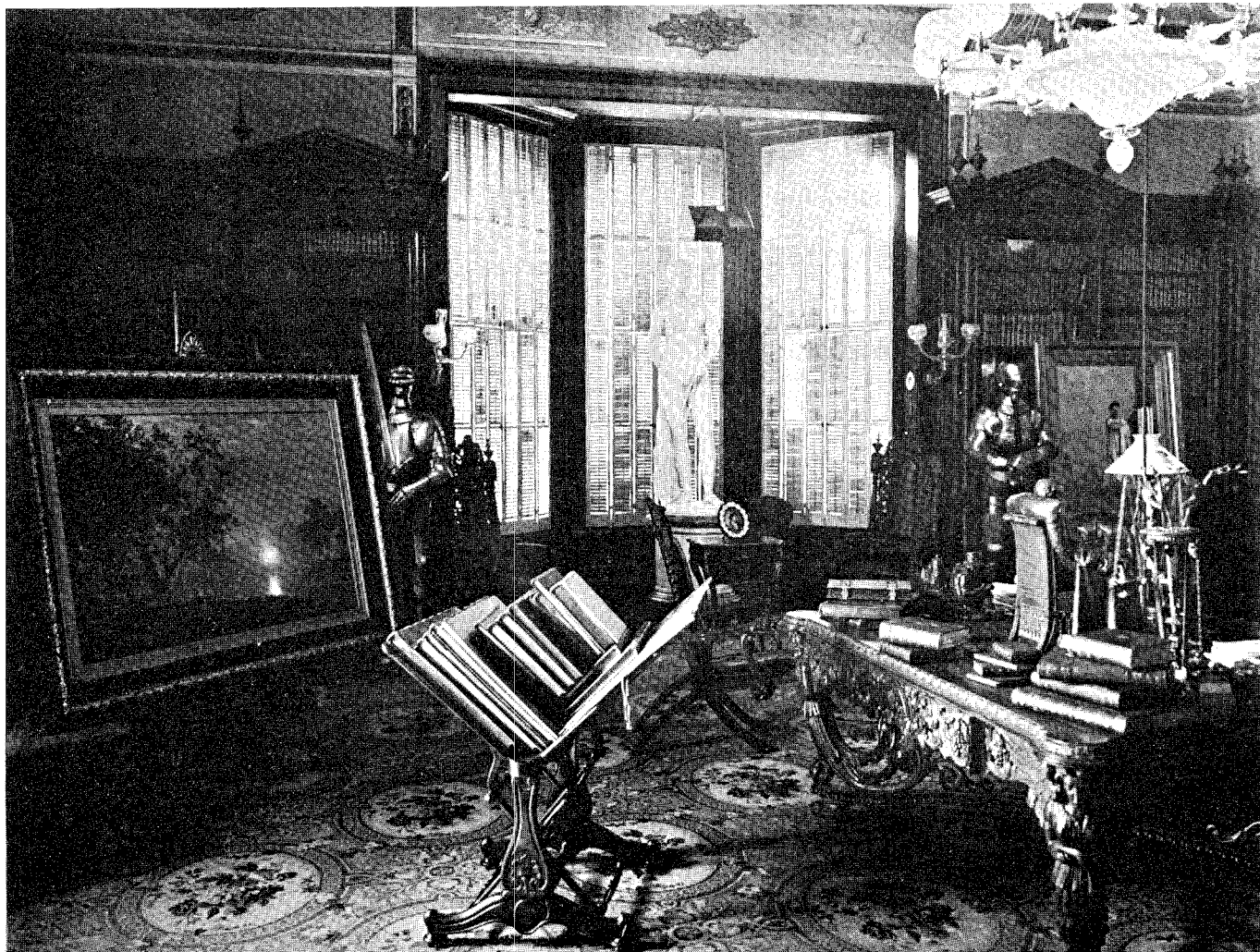




Multnomah Falls, Cascades, Columbia  
River. *This mammoth-plate view  
(approximately 18" x 22") was made in  
1867 when Watkins toured distant  
Oregon and Washington.*

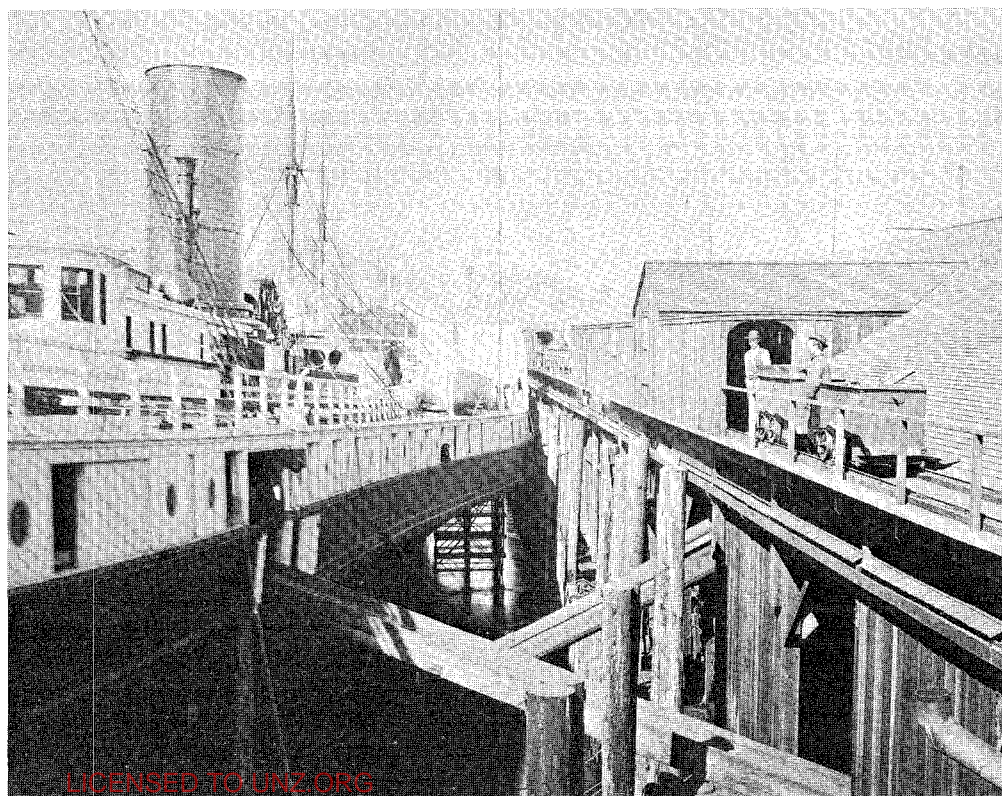






Library at Thurlow Lodge. *Watkins' photograph of the library at the Menlo Park mansion of Senator Milton and Mollie Latham was proof to all of the owners' education, good taste, and patronage of the arts.*

San Francisco Wharf, 1872. *Watkins' mammoth-plate view of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company wharves is a remarkable study in intersecting diagonals.*





## Watkins and the Historical Record



During the past few years of active interest in photographic history, the leading nineteenth-century photographers of the American West have gained unparalleled appreciation. Pictures by William Henry Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, Eadweard Muybridge, Andrew J. Russell, and others have climbed steadily in price at international sales, while new exhibitions and books regularly celebrate the photographers' works. No photographer among the group, however, has more dramatically come to the fore of contemporary recognition after decades of relative neglect than has the California pioneer, Carleton Watkins (1829-1916).

Despite a half-century career of single-handed picture-making ranging over the entire West, Watkins has been generally understood only as a competent and prolific photographer of scenery—one who might be taken seriously if more were known about his life. Hardly anyone bothered to answer the challenge of research about Watkins in the decades after his death in 1916 in the Napa State Hospital for the Insane, and very little of substance has been done even in the last years of renewed interest in photography. Two years after Watkins' death and burial in an unmarked grave, Watkins' friend Charles Turrill drew upon his notes of the old man's shaky recollections to publish an article which is of necessity regarded as the primary source on Watkins, despite its flaws and inaccuracies.<sup>1</sup> This remained the only work on Watkins until 1960, when a University of California professor of hydraulic engineering, J. W. Johnson, issued a notable monograph on Watkins.<sup>2</sup> Originally produced as a source guide to early illustrations on watershed materials, this carefully researched paper became a landmark document in modern photographic history with a reputation that considerably outlasted the availability of the actual publication. (Fortunately, a facsimile

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Richard Rudisill is Curator of Photographic History at the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe. His book, *Mirror Image: The Influence of the Daguerreotype on American Society* (1971), is a basic text of photographic history.



reprint may now be secured from the Photographic Archives of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.)

The only new, widely published writing of substance on Watkins has appeared as part of a major exhibition catalogue written by Weston Naef and James Wood, *Era of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1860-1885* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975). This unfortunate work, however, while a landmark for its recognition of the artistic and historic importance of the pictures of Watkins and other great westerners, is so ill-executed in matters of chronology, judgment, and information as to beg replacement by responsible scholarship.

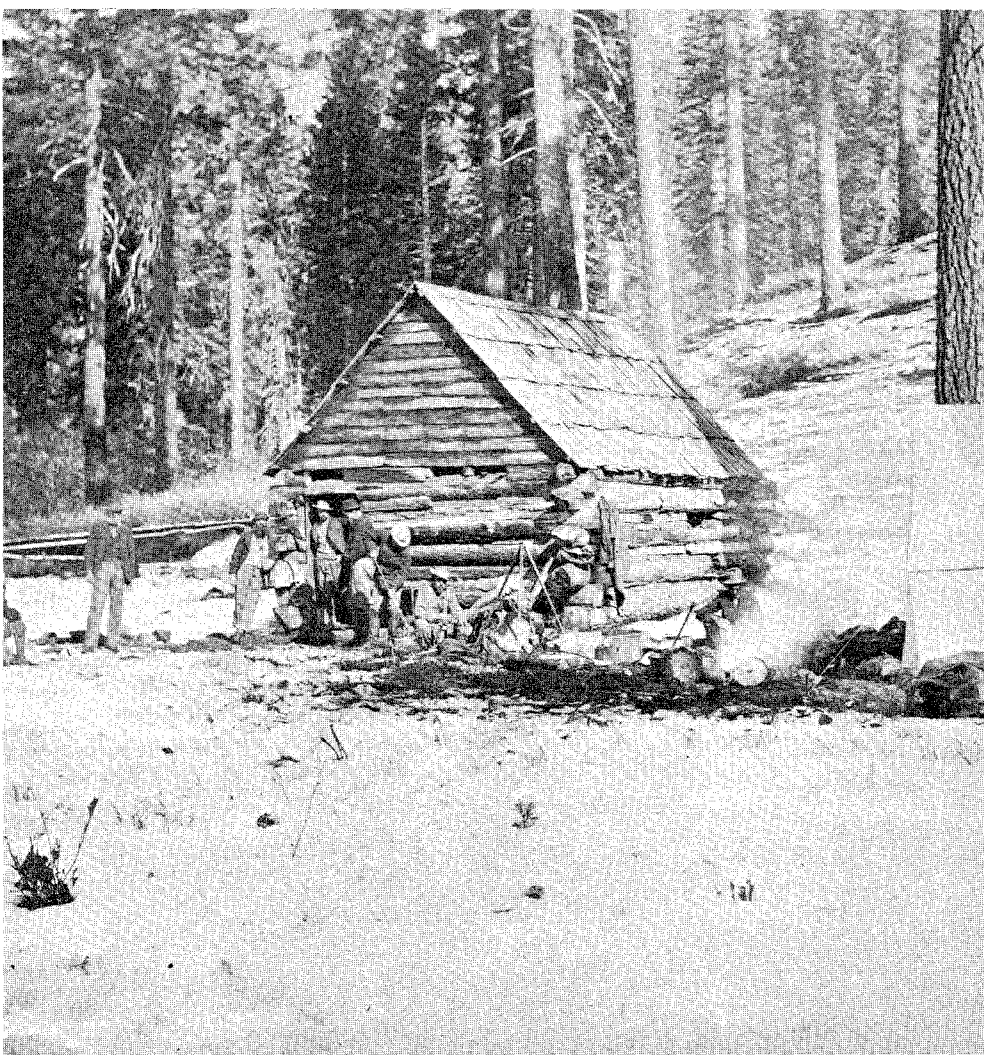
It is with the desire to supplement the past and to initiate correct gathering of basic information about Watkins that this present collection of articles has been written. Only after efforts such as this to establish dates, to collect bodies of work large and comparative enough to define style, and to begin a true *catalogue raisonné* for Watkins will genuine understanding of his accomplishments be achieved. Pauline Grenbeaux and Nanette Sexton offer articles illuminating Watkins' unknown early work and the chronological and technical patterns of the Yosemite period. With Peter Palmquist's revelations about Watkins as a publisher, these essays make possible a fresh look at Watkins' entire career and provide welcome new information for the record. It is to be hoped that further work will explore in particular Watkins' later years, during which he carried his camera into the regions of the Columbia River, the Nevada silver mines, Southern California and Western Arizona, and along the railroad lines into Utah.

The scope of the present articles has been limited to the first half of Watkins' career for reasons of space and logic. After the financial reverses sustained by Watkins in the mid-1870's (as noted in Peter Palmquist's essay), the photographer's progression was not as it had been. Many of his major negatives passed into the control of I. W. Taber, and a bitter but wiser and more exper-



Leland Stanford, Jr. In 1872 the four-year-old scion was brought to Watkins at his 22-26 Montgomery Street studio for this albumin cabinet portrait.





Camp in Warner's Valley, Lassen's Butte, Siskiyou County (no. 1569).  
*Watkins accompanied King's survey party to photograph their findings.*



Merchants' Exchange, San Francisco  
 (no. 939). Routine photographs of  
 commercial buildings supplied bread-  
 and-butter money to photographers like  
 Watkins who made this stereograph  
 in the 1870's.



iened Watkins was forced to remake his previous images as best he could for a changed market. Soon thereafter, he adapted his technique to accommodate the new system of the dry-plate negative, and his work was naturally altered as much as his outlook. A few samples of his work from this period between 1875 and the loss of his vision in the 1890's appear in the concluding photo essay in hopes of encouraging examination of this neglected mature work and its relevance to his full career.

The study of Carleton Watkins could well serve as a model for historical research because so much of his work is still at hand. Although most of his negatives and earliest daguerreotypes perished in the 1906 disaster and although his biographical details are shadowed, it is nevertheless possible to search out as yet unfound information about Watkins in newspapers and periodicals, to make comparisons between bodies of pictures, and to reconstruct chronological and numerical systems. We are, in short, able to focus on this man whose photographic consciousness was completely formed in the Far West and make him a working example of how solid photographic historical research methods can uncover a photographer's work and assess its significance for history. Simultaneously we can appreciate to the full the quality of his work as photographic art.

Once sufficient examination has been made of the details of Watkins' career and the stylistic progressions in his work, we may be able to extrapolate to the more general aspects of how the techniques and materials of his early career affected the images he produced. In an age of lightweight cameras and easy enlargements, for example, it is necessary to understand that in Watkins' day making a large picture meant making on the spot, by hand, an equally large glass negative. The glass had to be coated with light-sensitive chemicals, exposed, and processed before it dried or lost its ability to accept an image. When complete, the negative was exposed to sunlight until its image appeared on paper coated with sensitive chemicals in a layer of egg white. The entire

procedure was slow and laborious, and it required considerable thought and care to produce richly toned, subtle images of great detail and beauty as seen in Watkins' prints. Familiarity with the processes used by Watkins should make it possible to avoid some of the recent confusion that, for example, would have us believe that Watkins was particularly concerned with achieving a painterly aerial perspective when he was merely accepting the technical realities of his materials. Likewise, his negatives' hypersensitivity to blue skies and his prints' tendency to bleach out in light areas should not confuse modern writers. Research must be subject to checks and verifications and must be considered, as are the following articles, work of exploration in progress.

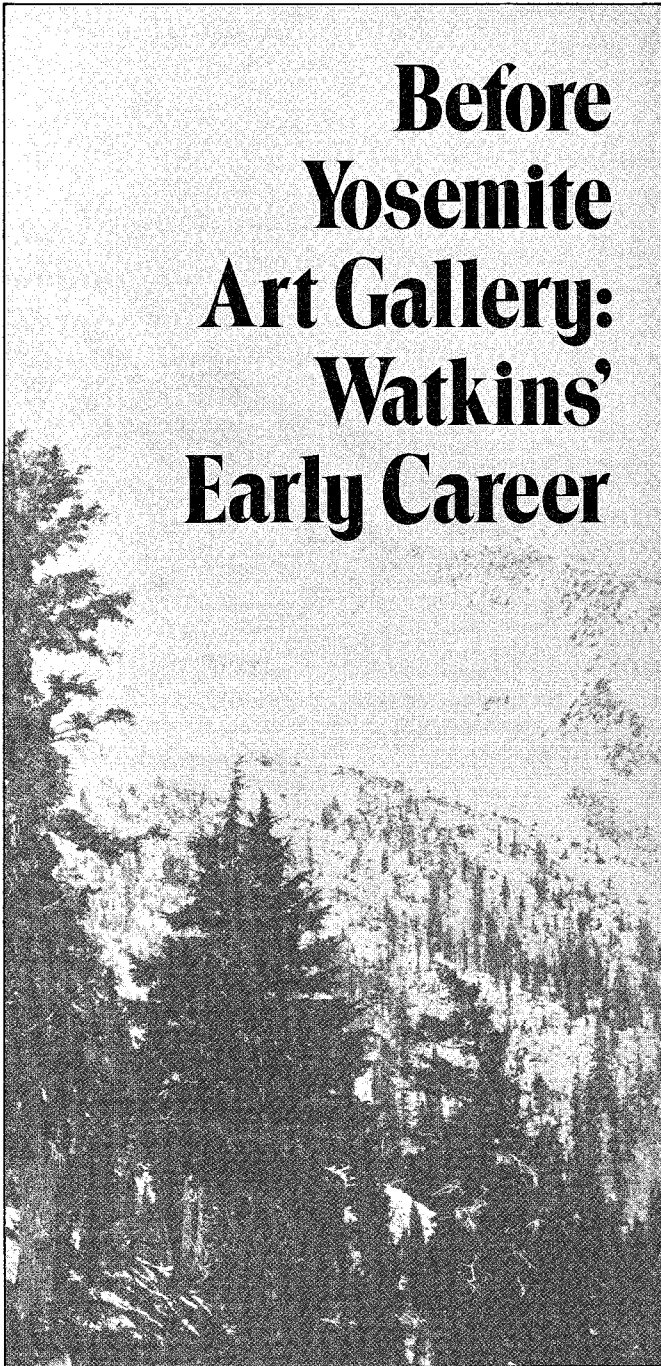
Exploration in progress has come to be a regular concern for Pauline Grenbeaux, guest editor for this special Watkins inquiry. She completed a Master's thesis on Watkins at the University of California at Davis and has continued her research for the past five years. We are fortunate that her knowledge and enthusiasm have been available to us throughout the development of this collection of work, and we are grateful that she could take up the labor of organizing and guiding our efforts, moving from writer to editor when the need arose.

After the initial planning for this series of essays, the authors were saddened by the untimely death of Terry Wm. Mangan, our original editor and the California Historical Society's Curator of Photographs, a fact made yet more unhappy by the ending of a career filled with solid accomplishments despite its brevity. Terry's energy, imagination, and sense of quality of work encouraged us in these present efforts at the outset and have remained with us to their completion. It seems to us proper that the Watkins essays should carry our respectful dedication to his memory.

The photographs of Multnomah Falls, Stanford, Jr., and the library are courtesy Stanford University Museum of Art. The others are from the CHS Library.



## Before Yosemite Art Gallery: Watkins' Early Career



Carleton Watkins first became famous for landscape photography in the 1860's. By 1863, he achieved national attention when Oliver Wendell Holmes praised the photographer's Yosemite views in the *Atlantic Monthly*<sup>3</sup> and when the prestigious Goupil's Art Gallery in New York exhibited them in their windows. In 1867, Watkins advertised his Yosemite Art Gallery in San Francisco; in 1868, he was recognized in Europe for having won the only medal for landscape photographs at the Paris Exposition; and by 1872, he was prosperous enough to move to large, more luxurious quarters in San Francisco.

Watkins' accomplishments are often cited as evidence that his most famous early work—the 1861 Yosemite views—was enormously successful. However, the dates of his known successes and the gaps in documentation between them seem to indicate that Watkins' critical and financial triumphs did not occur immediately upon his return from his photographing expedition to Yosemite in 1861 as has been previously assumed. Further, the degree of Watkins' artistic and technical ability—accomplishments which eventually won him warranted praise and support—makes it clear that Watkins must have had a more active photographic life prior to 1861 than has been previously documented. This essay examines Watkins' career prior to the advent of his famed Yosemite Art Gallery in 1867.

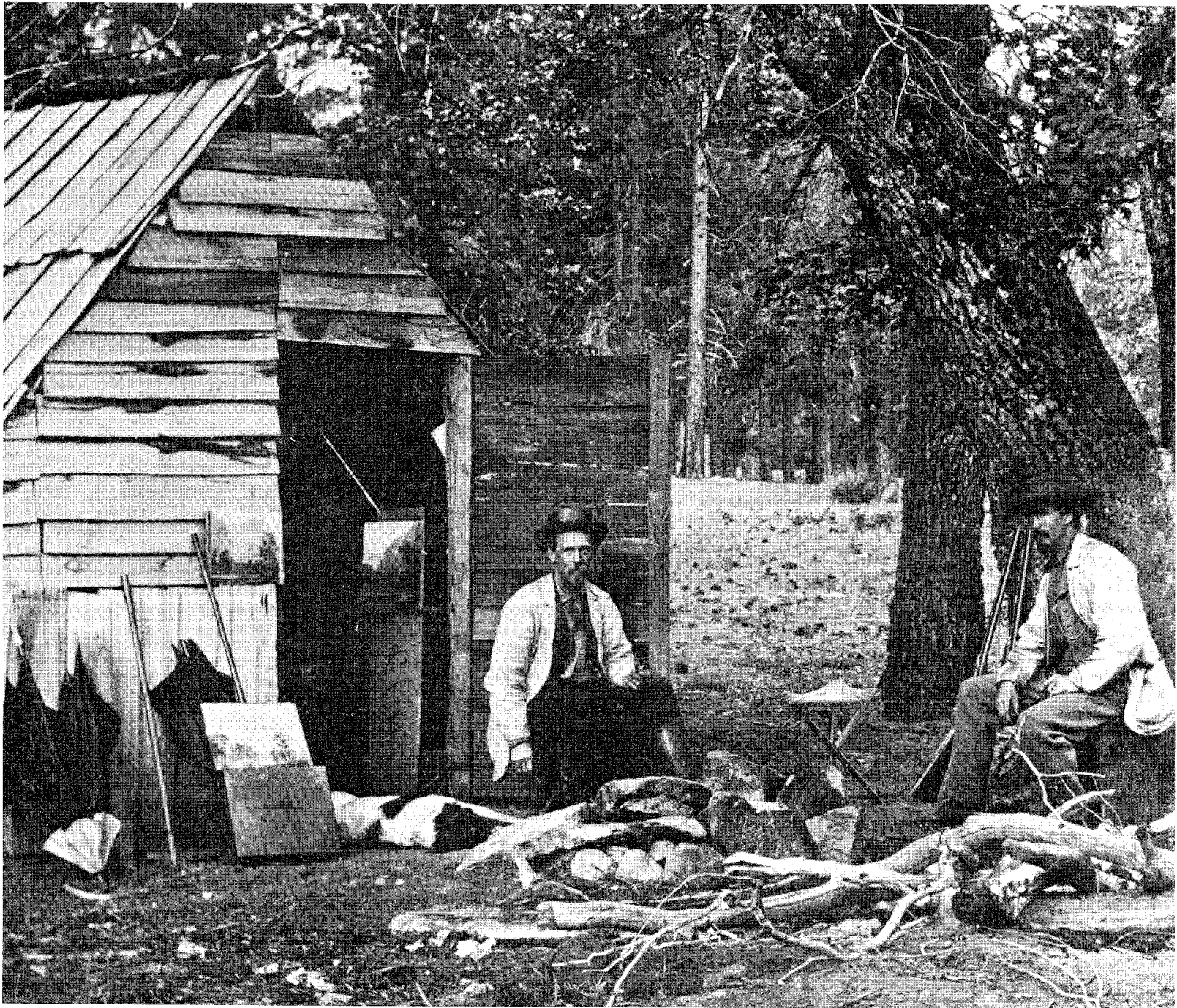
Watkins moved to California from Oneonta, New York, where he had been born on November 11, 1829, the youngest of five children in the family of Scottish hotelkeepers.<sup>4</sup> A frequent guest at the Watkins hotel was Collis P. Huntington,<sup>5</sup> who was establishing himself in the hardware business in Oneonta. Considerable attention has been given the acquaintance of the two men by Watkins enthusiasts because of the fame Huntington later achieved. Watkins' daughter Julia believed that

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Pauline Grenbeaux is an art and photograph historian interested in the cultural life of early California and a researcher of photographic documents for the California Railroad Museum. She is currently working on a series of essays on railroad patronage of photography.



*In Camp, Yosemite. Artists Tom Hill  
and Virgil Williams traveled with  
Watkins in Yosemite to study and advise  
the government on how to  
preserve the valley.*





her father and Huntington traveled west together when they were both twenty-one years of age, and her claim has been repeated since she was interviewed by Ralph Anderson in 1949. Biographies of Huntington, however, contradict her.<sup>6</sup> Huntington left for California in 1849 with six other Oneontans, but the passenger list for their ship, *The Humboldt*, does not include Watkins' name. Watkins' daughter believed that when her father arrived in San Francisco, a major fire forced him to stay in San Jose. Huntington had returned to New York for his wife and arrived again in San Francisco on May 5, 1851, only two days after the great fire of May 3 which razed the entire business district of the city. However, the passenger list for Huntington's ship again does not include Watkins' name. A passenger list for the *Michaelangelo* arriving from New York on August 2, 1852, does include a C. Watkins.<sup>7</sup> Whatever his travel arrangements, by 1853 Watkins had joined his fellow Oneontans who had settled in Sacramento. He is listed in the 1853 city directory as a carpenter dwelling at G. W. Murray's. George W. Murray, a successful bookseller and stationer in Sacramento, had been the bookkeeper for the S. & C. P. Huntington Co. in Oneonta.

It does seem that Huntington's powerful position with the Central Pacific Railroad had some influence on Watkins' career in the 1870's and after. Charles Turrill, Watkins' principal biographer, said that the two men had contact on many occasions. Watkins, for example, made photographs for the railroad—often without charge—and Huntington provided Watkins with a free pass which carried him and his huge load of equipment anywhere on the railroad lines. Turrill even tells an anecdote about Huntington protecting this relationship by closing an in-house photographic department started by the company in his absence. When Watkins was nearing retirement age, Huntington arranged for a small ranch west of Sacramento to be given by the railroad to Watkins for his loyalty and unpaid labor.<sup>8</sup> Julia Watkins claimed the two men were "chummy friends" and that

she had occasion to meet both Mr. and Mrs. Huntington when she was a girl.<sup>9</sup> It is significant that Watkins named his only son Collis, a gesture that indicates respect if not fondness for his old neighbor.

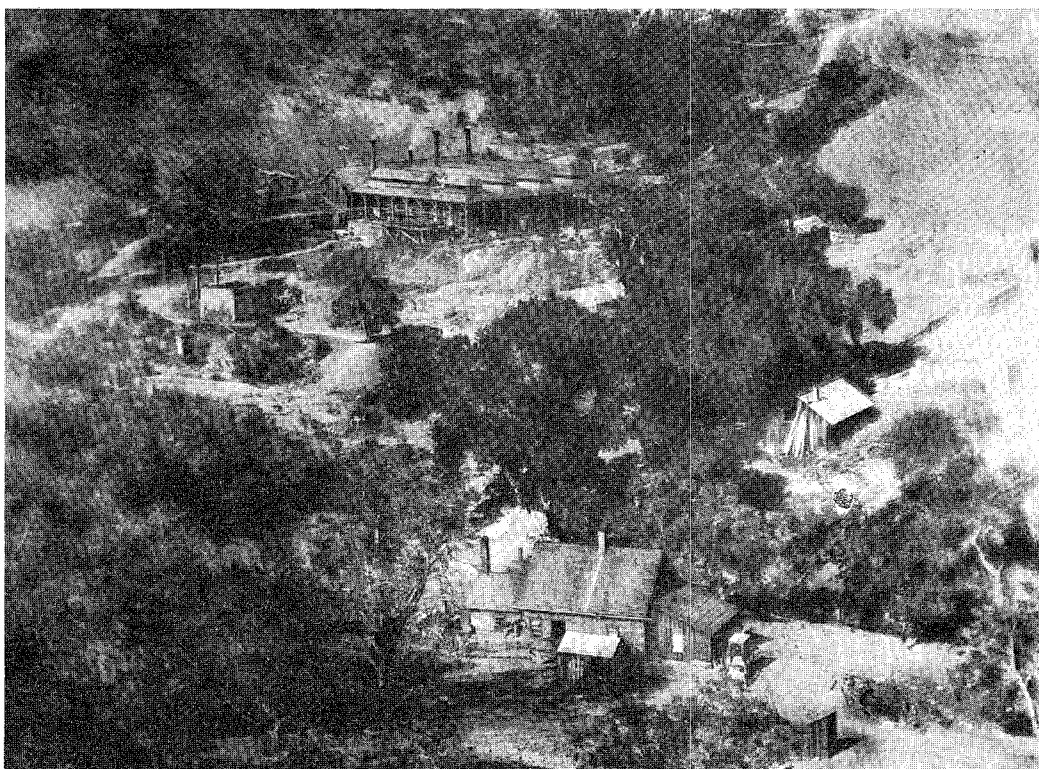
In spite of evidence indicating professional and personal ties after Watkins' had become famous in his own right, there is little evidence to show any influence by Huntington on Watkins' initial efforts in photography or his early career. On the contrary, Alfred Hart—not Watkins—was appointed the official Central Pacific Railroad photographer during its construction even though Watkins had much experience in outdoor photography. Turrill noted that Watkins was not involved with the railroad in any way until after Hart's tenure ended in 1869.<sup>10</sup>

When George Murray & Company moved to San Francisco, Watkins moved with it. He is listed as a clerk in Murray's store on the Montgomery Block in the 1854 city directory. Watkins told Turrill he watched the construction of the Montgomery Block and that he especially remembered the "forest of pilings." Since the construction took place between July and December, 1853, Watkins and Murray must have moved to the city by the end of the summer of 1853. Turrill said it was during this period that Watkins met Robert Vance, a daguerreotypist who owned a large gallery in San Francisco. But it is more likely that Watkins met Vance earlier in Sacramento where Vance also had a gallery. This acquaintance was to have a more profound influence on his future than those with Huntington or Murphy.<sup>11</sup>

Watkins, who knew nothing about the highly complex photographic processes, agreed to tend temporarily Vance's San Jose gallery after the regular operator suddenly quit. Vance instructed Watkins to bluff his way through the picture-taking until a replacement could be found. Watkins somehow secured adequate images, and he remained on the job.<sup>12</sup>

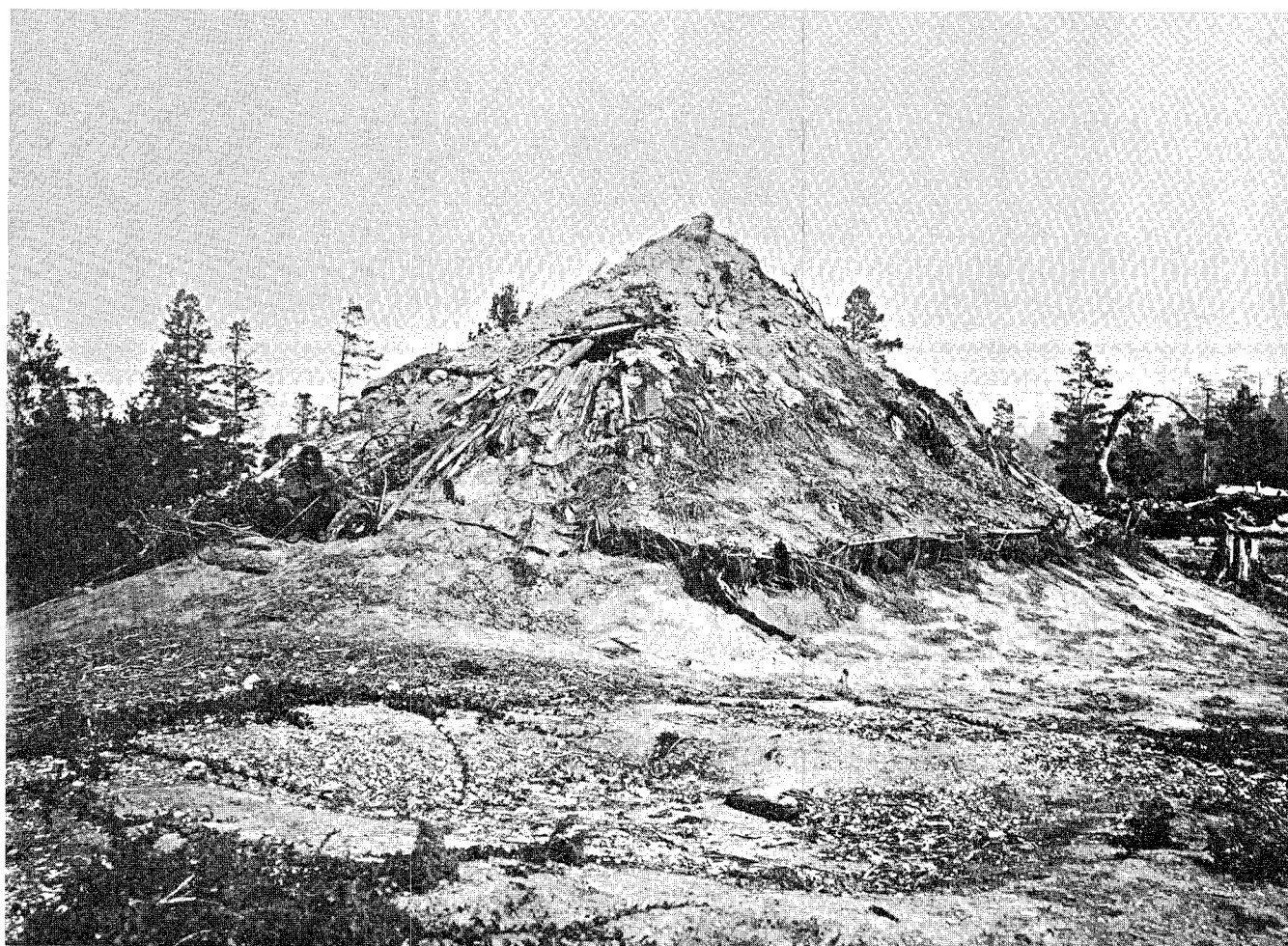
Watkins must have learned from Vance both da-





New Idrea Quicksilver Mine, Inyo County, 1857. This blurred image is one of nine photocopy enlargements (39" x 58") in the Hearst Mining Collection which is attributed to the young Watkins.

Indian Sweat House—Mendocino County. Interested in California's peoples, Watkins made this mammoth-plate photograph sometime between 1861 and 1864.





*Babies! Babies! Watkins' advertisement  
in the San Jose Tribune first  
appeared on March 5, 1856, and ran  
through the summer months.*

guerreotypy, which was still the standard method of photography in the 1850's, and ambrotypy, which Vance promoted for portraits in his San Francisco studio. Most of Watkins' work for Vance would have been portrait photography, and Watkins' biographer Turrill tells us that Watkins' "experience in lighting, posing, etc., gained in the gallery in San Jose led to his doing a vast amount of portrait work."<sup>13</sup> Watkins also gained his first exposure to outdoor photography with Vance.

Vance, a pioneer in outdoor photography, had produced one of the earliest extensive series of outdoor daguerreotypes by the time he associated with Watkins. In 1851, he exhibited in New York 300 whole-plate views of the terrain, mines, and cities of California. Vance continued to work outdoors throughout the 1850's, and he must have discussed the special requirements of outdoor photography with his assistant. Watkins, of course, was personally familiar with Vance's work, and he copied some of Vance's landscape daguerreotypes at the gallery. Watkins kept a collection of daguerreotypes from this period which were destroyed in the fire of 1906.<sup>14</sup>

Photograph historians Weston Naef and James Wood have recently claimed in *Era of Exploration* that Vance only indirectly influenced Watkins' development, merely making available to the novice Watkins in 1859 stereographs taken by European and East Coast counterparts.<sup>15</sup> However, when Watkins' early landscape photographs are compared (as is often done) to those of another early Yosemite photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, it is clear that Watkins received and remained true to his western training. Muybridge, who studied photography in England in the early 1860's and retained an affinity with English pictorialism, used cloud effects and dynamic viewpoints to evoke dramatic feelings in his photographs. Watkins, on the other hand, did not interject his presence between the subject and the viewer, except on rare occasions. Rather, Watkins sought straightforward viewpoints and classical compositions

# AMBROTYPES!

NEW ARRANGEMENT AT

## FORD'S DAGUERREAN GALLERY,

BELLA UNION, SAN JOSE.

**M**R. WATKINS would respectfully announce that he is now taking, at Ford's Daguerrean Gallery, San Jose, the justly celebrated **AMBROTYPE**. These beautiful pictures are eliciting universal admiration, and they have only to be seen to be admired.

The process is more favorable than the Daguerreotype for obtaining **GOOD EXPRESSIONS**, the sitting not being more than one-fifth as long. For the same reason it is more successful with **Children and Babies**. m5

## Babies !! Babies !!

**Bring on your Babies!**

**T**HE LITTLE TIME REQUIRED to take the **AMBROTYPE**, enables **MR. WATKINS** to warrant **THE MOST PERFECT SUCCESS** with the little folks.  
San Jose, March 5th, 1856. m5-1m

to mirror the essential harmony and stability he saw in his subjects. Basic to this approach are the principles urged by his mentor, Vance, who said of his own work: "These are no exaggerated and high-colored sketches, got up to produce effect, but are as every daguerreotype must be, the stereotyped impression of the real thing itself."<sup>16</sup>

In connection with Vance's gallery, with another gallery, or perhaps independently, Watkins experimented with outdoor photography before he left the San Jose area. Biographer and friend Turrill was familiar with two early daguerreotypes of Mission Santa Clara which he believed were taken by Watkins during these years. In 1856 or 1857, Turrill wrote, Watkins photographed both the New Almaden quicksilver mine and the New Idrea mine, and with this group of photographs Watkins began his career as a viewman rather than a portrait-taker. These were the first, according to Turrill, of Watkins' paper-printed photographs as opposed to the one-of-a-kind daguerreotypes or ambrotypes.



At Mrs. Frémont's, Black Point, San Francisco, 1861. John C. Frémont purchased the Black Point cottage overlooking San Francisco Bay for his wife Jessie while he was working on the Mariposa Estate.

Multiple printings on paper from a single negative offered the possibility of a speculative investment of time and effort to secure a negative plate of a subject with more general appeal than a portrait. Accordingly, Turrill noted that Watkins' views of New Almaden were taken at a time when there was much publicity over conflicting legal claims to the property and that Watkins "received quite an incentive in his photographic career from the sale of the pictures."<sup>17</sup>

Just how long Watkins remained under Vance's tutelage is unclear; Turrill says only "a short period."<sup>18</sup> In 1856, Watkins advertised that he was taking ambrotypes at Ford's Daguerrean Gallery in San Jose, presumably as the gallery manager.<sup>19</sup> Ford, like Vance, had galleries in San Francisco or nearby towns in the 1850's. In fact, Ford was Vance's competitor in Sacramento in 1853, and it is probable that Watkins met Ford there, too.

Watkins' arrangement with Ford apparently lasted until December, 1856, when James Clayton advertised that he was taking over "the rooms lately occupied by Mr. Watkins over the 'Bella Union,' and known as Ford's Daguerrean Gallery."<sup>20</sup> Four years later, in 1860, Clayton ran another ad which hints at a possible ongoing freelance relationship with Watkins after Clayton took over the gallery.

The undersigned received all the Premiums for both Ambrotypes and photographs, at the last County Fair; it being the second time against all competition . . . I had an artist to work for me last summer, who did the paper work on exhibition at the late Fair; he has worked for me at different times for the last four years. I still employ him when there is work sufficient to pay me.<sup>21</sup>

Watkins was certainly one of the few skilled photographers making paper-printed photographs in the Bay Area at that early date.

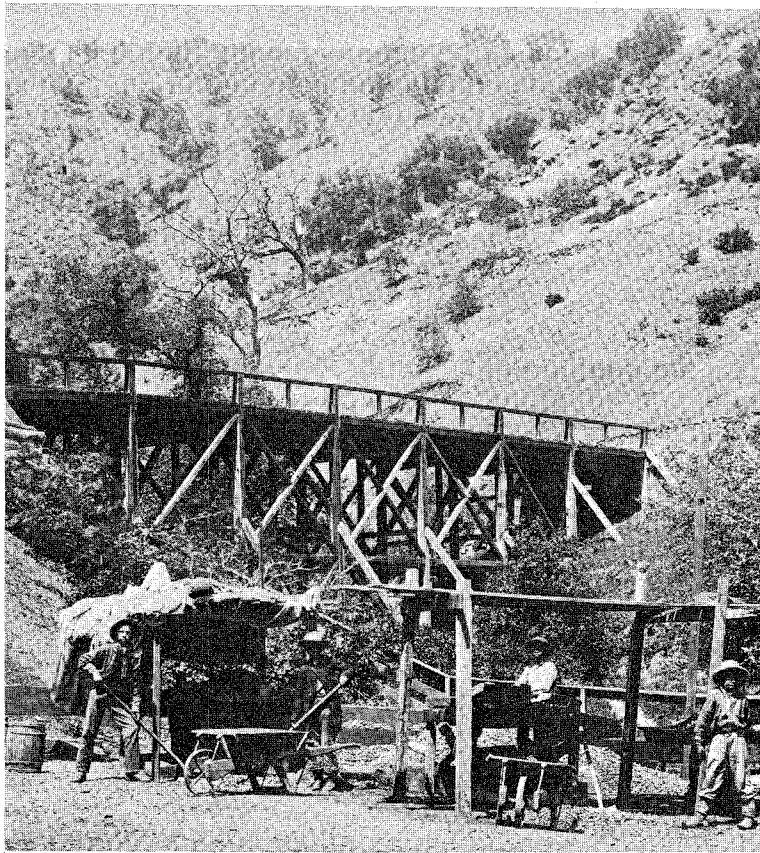
Turrill records that Watkins returned to San Francisco in late 1857 or early 1858,<sup>22</sup> but the San Francisco directories for the years 1858-1860 do not list him as a resident. (Unfortunately, there were no San Jose directories



until 1870.) Watkins is listed in the 1861 directory as a "daguerrean operator" at 425 Montgomery. The term "operator" suggests that he was not the owner of the business, but a freelance or salaried employee. He was again listed at this address in the 1865-1869 directories under "photographic galleries," a term which implies that he had his own business by then. In 1867, he was advertising his Yosemite Art Gallery at the Montgomery address.

Watkins' professional address between 1861 and 1865 is less certain. His stereographs before 1867 carried no printed address or gallery name, only a handwritten title and signature. A title page dated 1863 which he used for bound collections of prints gave his address only as "San Francisco, Cal." Turrill said Watkins' studio was at the southeast corner of Clay and Kearney streets when he set out for Yosemite in 1861.<sup>23</sup> Watkins' address is given in 1863 as 649 Clay Street, with no indication whether this was a home or business address. Only his home address (on Calhoun) was listed in 1862, and he





The Metal Pickers, New Almaden.  
In the early 1860's Watkins visited the  
quicksilver mines south of San Francisco,  
incidentally providing one of the  
earliest photographic records of child  
labor in America.

was not listed at all in 1864. Since Watkins sold many landscape photographs prior to 1865 when he was located at 425 Montgomery, he must have had facilities in which to display and sell them, as well as facilities in which to print them. He might have prepared them at the Clay Street address and sold them through galleries and dealers.

The earliest extant group of photographs by Watkins are the 1859 views of mining activities in the foothills of Mariposa County just west of Yosemite. The next earliest are the Yosemite views of 1861 taken with his mammoth-plate camera and stereoscopic camera. Although both series of photographs required outdoor shooting trips in the same general area of California, the nature of the photographs are very different. The Mariposa collection was a commercial job whose success rested on the adequacy of Watkins' depiction of subjects chosen by his exacting client; the Yosemite series required an investment of Watkins' time and money, and its success lay in the artistic presentation of subjects chosen by Watkins and the willingness of the public to pay a moderate price to own one of these selected views.

Watkins' decision to go into Yosemite—a difficult trip for anyone in those days—was both an artistic and a commercial one.

The Yosemite Valley had only recently come to public attention when Watkins made his images. The first extensive report on the West Coast of Yosemite's unusual characteristics was the account of James Hutchings, a member of the first party of sightseers to enter the valley, which appeared in *Hutchings California Magazine* on October 9, 1859. The first reports read widely on the East Coast were Horace Greeley's account of his trip in the *New York Tribune* in 1859 and Thomas Starr King's serialized record of his excursion in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, which ran from December, 1860, through February, 1861.

After these introductions to the valley's natural wonders, the public understandably wanted pictures. Photographer Charles Weed had accompanied Hutchings in 1859 and secured twenty whole-plate views and forty stereographs from which Hutchings' engravers illustrated the articles in *Hutchings California Magazine*.<sup>24</sup> However, Weed's photographs were poor in technical and artistic quality and were poorly promoted, and they thus achieved a very limited distribution and reputation.

Watkins' views, which were technically and artistically superior to Weed's and which included more subjects, should have been immediately popular. Yet all available evidence indicates that they were not widely distributed until 1863, two years after they were made. Oliver Wendell Holmes indicated in his 1863 review of Watkins' stereographs that he was not familiar with the work before then.<sup>25</sup> Surely a man who followed photographic developments and curiosities as closely as Holmes would have been aware of the photographs had they been widely available earlier. Writer Fitz Hugh Ludlow wrote in the *Atlantic Monthly* in his travel account of his 1863 trip to Yosemite that Watkins' photographs were first seen in New York only months before his trip.<sup>26</sup> To date, no reference to the Yosemite views dated



prior to 1863 has been found by this writer. It is significant, too, that Lawrence & Houseworth, a fiercely competitive San Francisco photography firm, did not send a photographer to Yosemite to make its own photographs until 1864—three years after Watkins' trip. Because the Yosemite Valley was accessible only in the warm months, this 1864 date would have been the first opportunity after Watkins' public acclaim of 1863 for the firm to enter the competition for sales of Yosemite views.

Commercial success did not come to Watkins for several more years—probably not until we find him advertising his Yosemite Art Gallery in 1867. His pocket diary of 1864 (now at the Bancroft Library) reveals limited sales and subject matter: in addition to the Yosemite views, he was selling only a few Mariposa views, a series of views of the Mendocino Coast, another of the New Idrea mines, and some miscellaneous views of San Francisco and the Bay Area. Conspicuously absent from this list are the tourist views like Seal Rock and Alcatraz which were the mainstay of the large photographic publishers like San Francisco's Lawrence & Houseworth. Also absent is any mention of portrait photography, the stock-in-trade of most photographic operations. Watkins' pocket diary further indicates that he made his prints to order, filling requests for single prints and batches of up to thirty-one per customer. Some requests appear to have been mail orders or at least orders to be sent as far away as Paris. Watkins most likely sold them through dealers as well. A receipt preserved at the Bancroft Library dated May 28, 1864, and signed by Watkins names a Mr. Boyd as agent for one set of large Yosemite views.

Additional evidence indicates that Watkins also sold his photographs through other galleries prior to the opening of his Yosemite Gallery in 1867. Several Watkins prints now held by the California State Library are embossed in the lower corner with "Bradley & Rulofson S.F." For example, the photograph *Bridge at Clarks*,

identified as "Bradley & Rulofson No. 102," was taken at the same time as stereograph no. 1157, *Bridge Over the South Fork at Clark's*, which was copyrighted by Watkins in 1867, and it is identical to a print in Watkins' series, *Photographs of Yosemite Valley*, from the years 1872-1875 (now at Stanford University). The California State Library's view is not a photocopy, and Watkins apparently retained the negative plate; therefore, it appears that the Bradley & Rulofson prints were somehow obtained directly from Watkins.

The photography studio of Lawrence & Houseworth also procured photographs from Watkins during this period. One collector of photographs has noted:

A clue that links Houseworth and Watkins can be seen in a series of slides taken at the launching of the gunboat *Comanche*—some of which were copyrighted by L[awrence] & H[ouseworth] in 1864 and others, almost identical, by Watkins in 1867. . . . The two photographers might have been working together, but now I think that Watkins did the work but only sold part of the negatives to L.&H., bringing out the rest in his own name three years later.<sup>27</sup>

Another connection between Watkins and Lawrence & Houseworth is revealed by the unexplained grouping of Watkins' photographs with those taken by Weed in 1864 and widely marketed by Lawrence & Houseworth. Similarly, the nearly identical size and format of two albums held by the New York Public Library—one with thirty-one signed by Watkins, another with twenty-eight signed by Weed—suggests a common publisher. One researcher has discovered that six of Weed's views in the library's album appeared in other collections attributed to Watkins.<sup>28</sup> Although the small numbers (usually one or two Weed prints among many Watkins prints) suggests that some of Weed's photographs found their way into Watkins' collections, it seems unlikely that Watkins bought them from either Weed or Lawrence & Houseworth. Watkins already owned superb photographs of the same views.

Another example of the ties between Watkins and



Lawrence & Houseworth is a collection at Yosemite National Park of unmounted photographs by Watkins, Weed, and Muybridge dating from 1872 and earlier which clearly have a common publisher. Photocopies of some of these views were later published in *The Sun Album* by Houseworth (Lawrence having left the firm in 1867), leading to the conclusion that Houseworth was the publisher of the Yosemite National Park collection. Presumably, Houseworth obtained his views from the photographers themselves, because both Watkins and Muybridge owned the copyrights to their views.

In fact, Watkins copyrighted most of his views in 1867. Although he did authorize sales of his work through others even after 1867 (one series at the University of California at Los Angeles has mounts imprinted with his copyright notice and a handwritten statement that Hardy Gillard was agent for the views), the copyright would have restrained unauthorized sales of his views. Historians Naef and Wood suggest that Houseworth may have exhibited pirated Yosemite views by Watkins at the 1867 Paris Exposition, because the views by Weed, Watkins' only rival for subject matter, were not sufficiently good to win the medals awarded to the firm for landscape views.<sup>29</sup> Naef and Wood also suggest that this was the reason Watkins and Muybridge moved to copyright their own work in 1867.

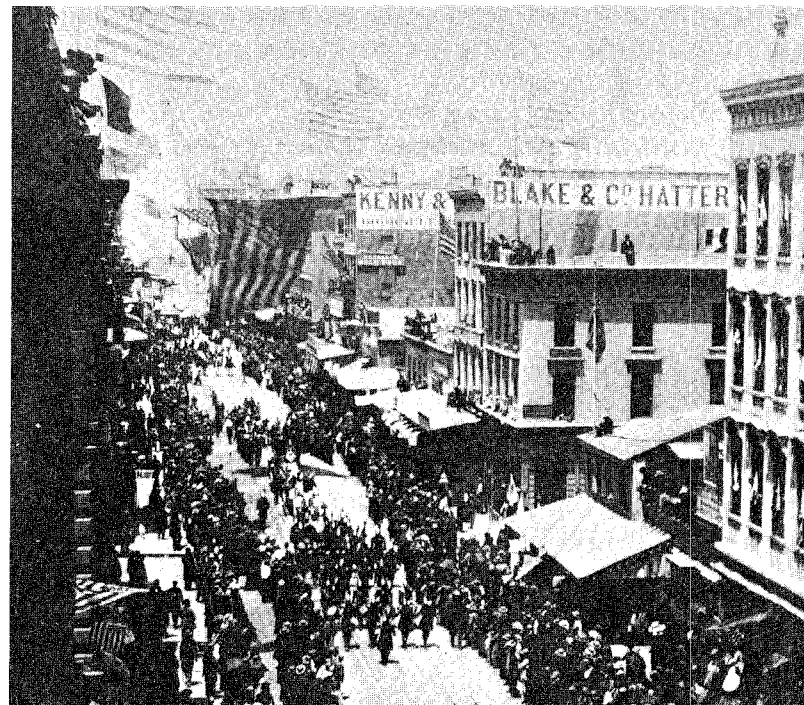
Certainly a more probable reason that Watkins copyrighted his work in 1867, however, is that he seriously entered the retail market that year by establishing his Yosemite Art Gallery. (He also had stereo mounts printed with his name for the first time that year.) Copyrighting his work was a logical antecedent to his financial investment. Probably the most pressing reason for Muybridge to copyright in 1867 was to protect the collection of Yosemite views that he produced that year. Had Houseworth unethically exhibited Watkins' work at the Paris Exposition—if indeed the firm exhibited it at all—it should have raised some comment in the San Francisco press by Watkins' admirers. This author has found

no such comment. This is not to suggest that Watkins would not have liked to win the medal—he competed for it under his own name the next year and won—or that Watkins did not prefer to control the publication and sales of his own work—he opened his own gallery presumably for that very reason. Rather, it suggests that Houseworth may have obtained and sold some of Watkins' photographs through a specific business arrangement.

A more incriminating use of Watkins' photographs without acknowledgment of his authorship may be found in an inexpensive album of photocopies sold in 1866 by D. Appleton & Company of New York, a copy of which is now at the Huntington Library. The photocopies (6 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ " ), are identical, flaws and all, to the thirty mammoth-plate views (approximately 18" x 21") in another Huntington Library album which carries a dedication of 1864. If Watkins had produced or sanctioned the album, there would have been no need to use such poor photocopies when, at least by 1866, he had fine, small negative plates of nearly the same views. Unauthorized photocopies, however, were a way for the publisher to avoid the expense of a photographic expedition to Yosemite or the cost of purchasing the original prints.

Few of Watkins' 1861 mammoth-plate photographs remain today nor do they appear in the collections originally sold from the gallery. Instead, there exist nearly identical photographs in the later collections which are retakes of Watkins' 1861 views. The photographer returned to Yosemite in 1864, 1865, and 1866, presumably to expand his range of subjects and views. Some of the mammoth retakes were made concurrently with a series in smaller format produced for the U.S. Geological Survey in 1866. For example, the view showing an unidentified man standing in front of the Grizzly Giant from the 1861 series was retaken in both the mammoth and smaller format with Galen Clark, keeper of the Big Trees, in front of the giant tree.





Montgomery St., from Austin's Building, July 4, 1865. *Watkins' stereo camera was one of the first to capture a Fourth of July celebration.*

Not all the mammoth retakes were in response to the needs of the geological survey, however. Thus, the leaning tree in the 1861 view of the Three Brothers rock formation had fallen over by the time Watkins captured it in the 1866 view. The tree is down in another early undated mammoth view, but the water level shows that it was taken on a different occasion from the 1866 view. Watkins' retakes are from the same vantage point, are identical in composition and effect, and differ only in the changes in flora and water.

A reason for one set of Watkins' retakes is offered by Watkins' historian Nannette Sexton in her essay appearing in this issue. She suggests that a new camera lens acquired by Watkins after 1864 eliminated the need to round the top corners of the matting in order to mask the indistinct or shadowed corners of the image and made possible a wider angle of view. As an artist, Watkins naturally strove to improve his craft, and he responded admirably, as Sexton illustrates, to the new possibilities afforded by technical advances in his medium. But Watkins was also a businessman trying to make a profit from his artistic endeavors. Competition was tough, as Peter Palmquist points out in his essay in this issue, and there were considerations other than artistic ones in completely replacing a very successful series of albeit round-topped views, rather than simply adding different views made with the new equipment to his repertoire. Perhaps he desired uniformity of format and so wanted to eliminate the rounded top corners while keeping the tried-and-true views. Per-

haps he lost exclusive rights to his earlier views and wanted to reestablish his copyright. Perhaps he anticipated competition from Charles Weed, who made a second photographic trip to Yosemite in 1864 backed by the resources of the largest photographic equipment and publishing house in San Francisco, Lawrence & Houseworth. Perhaps Watkins believed that an updated series was necessary to maintain his reputation in San Francisco as the master of his art. The fate of Watkins' original negative plates might indicate other possibilities if their whereabouts were known. Perhaps the plates broke; perhaps Watkins reused the glass. Perhaps he was able to sell the original negatives to another photographer or publisher and sell his own new views of the same titles, thus doubling the commercial mileage from his subject. The second series of Yosemite views, like the first series and all the photographs of his early career, was made in response to a complex of factors which were both artistic—his own conception of beauty and the introduction of new techniques and equipment—and commercial—the expectations of his customers and changing market demands.

It is unfortunate that so many questions about the first thirteen years of Watkins' career—from 1854, when he learned photography, until 1867, when his career became publicly known through his gallery—remain unanswered. During these enormously important years Watkins grew as an artist and technician, linked his name forever with Yosemite, set a precedent for photographic careers based on landscape photography, and established aesthetic and technical standards of excellence for his genre. By filling in the gaps in his life story and by looking more carefully at the entire range of his work, we can more keenly appreciate the motivations and accomplishments of this great pioneer photographer.

*New Idrea* is courtesy the Bancroft Library; *In Camp*, courtesy National Park Service, Yosemite Collection; *Indian Sweat House*, courtesy Stanford University Museum of Art. The others are from the CHS Library.



# The Mariposa Views

According to his biographer, Carleton Watkins photographed the Mariposa Grove in 1858 or 1859, several years before his well-known 1861 series of Yosemite photographs.<sup>30</sup> This chronology has been questioned, however, because there are no dated photographs of the Mariposa Grove prior to Watkins' acquisition of a mammoth-plate camera in 1861, and there is no mention of Watkins being at the site in contemporary accounts. Moreover, Watkins' memory of dates was unreliable by the time his biographer, Charles Turrill, knew him. However, Watkins' imperial-sized photographs (about 13½" x 16") of the Mariposa area, images now in the collections of the California Historical Society and the Bancroft Library,<sup>31</sup> can be shown to be the basis for the line illustrations appearing in an 1859 issue of *Hutchings California Magazine*. These dated renderings confirm that Watkins traveled in the Mariposa area west of Yosemite, if not at the Big Trees grove, in 1859.

More importantly, the Mariposa photographs are now the only body of work known to be produced by Watkins prior to his 1861 series of photographs of Yosemite. In the Mariposa images, therefore, we see Watkins making an important step from novice to master, from the daguerreotypy taught to him by Robert Vance to the newly-introduced wet-plate photography he had mastered by 1861, from a good eye for composition to an inspired perception of beauty.

A comparison of Watkins' photographs with the engravings illustrating "Pen and Pencil Sketches in Bear Val-

ley," an article by A. Schwartz appearing in the July, 1859, issue of *Hutchings Magazine*,<sup>32</sup> shows that at least three of the article's six engravings were made from Watkins' photographs. According to one historian, Hutchings routinely brought a cameraman with him on his excursions "whenever possible, that the engraver might work from a perfectly accurate original,"<sup>33</sup> and he took photographer Charles Weed with him to Yosemite in 1859 to secure photographs to be used as the basis for illustrations of that trip. Hutchings traveled with Weed, whose contribution he only barely acknowledged in print, and it is therefore not surprising that Watkins, too, went uncredited for making the photographs on which the Mariposa illustrations were based.

On September 13, 1859, the *Mariposa Gazette* reviewed the Schwartz article. It commented that the Bear Valley article was conceived as one of a series which included those illustrated by Weed and written by Hutchings.

The sketch and drawings are from the pen and pencil of Col. Schwartz, an accomplished civil engineer, draughtsman, &c.; and recently commander of the Artillery of the Nicaraguan army, under Gen. Walker. These sketches of this region, including Yosemite Valley, are to be continued, it is understood. . . .<sup>34</sup>

Schwartz claimed to have visited the John C. Frémont residence at Mariposa with his party both in March of 1859 and in the summer. The photographs on which he based his illustrations were probably taken during the March trip and engraved for publication in the summer. Although the article in *Hutch-*

*ings* dealt mainly with another gold vein, Schwartz referred knowledgeably to branches leading through Agua Fria and Mariposa. Both the above-mentioned California Historical Society and Bancroft collections include views of Agua Fria and Mariposa. Schwartz and his party—including Watkins—must have toured those areas on the same trip.

Schwartz's article, like many others in *Hutchings*, is based largely on its illustrations. Representative of many such articles written about the hinterland, it demonstrates the important function of visual imagery to travel articles in Watkins' time. More narrative than documentary, the text leads the reader from one picture to another and describes just where the author is standing and what he is seeing. The writer, in fact, does not speak much of the general scenery but of specific views.

Coming from Coulterville by the trail, we strike a very fine view just before crossing Wyatt's bridge across the Merced River, which gives us a general idea of the situation and relative height of Col. Frémont's quartz works and the surrounding scenery.<sup>35</sup>

And again:

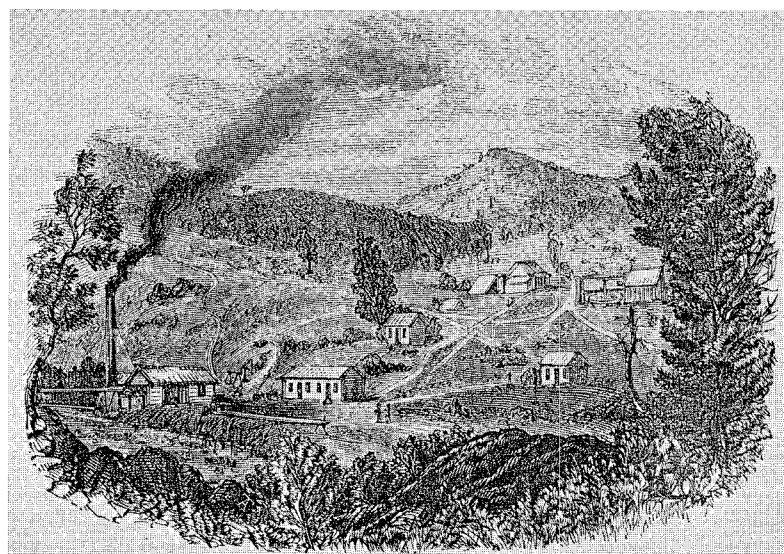
The well-timbered and nicely shaped hills of the background; the various trails and roads running up the hill sides; and, in the spring time, the whole surrounding country, like a beautiful Brussels carpet, from the variegated hues of the flowering bushes and green sward, constitute a most perfect landscape, particularly when viewed from the opposite hill, from whence our view was taken.<sup>36</sup>

The entire article seems conceived in terms of its photographs.

Watkins' Mariposa photographs

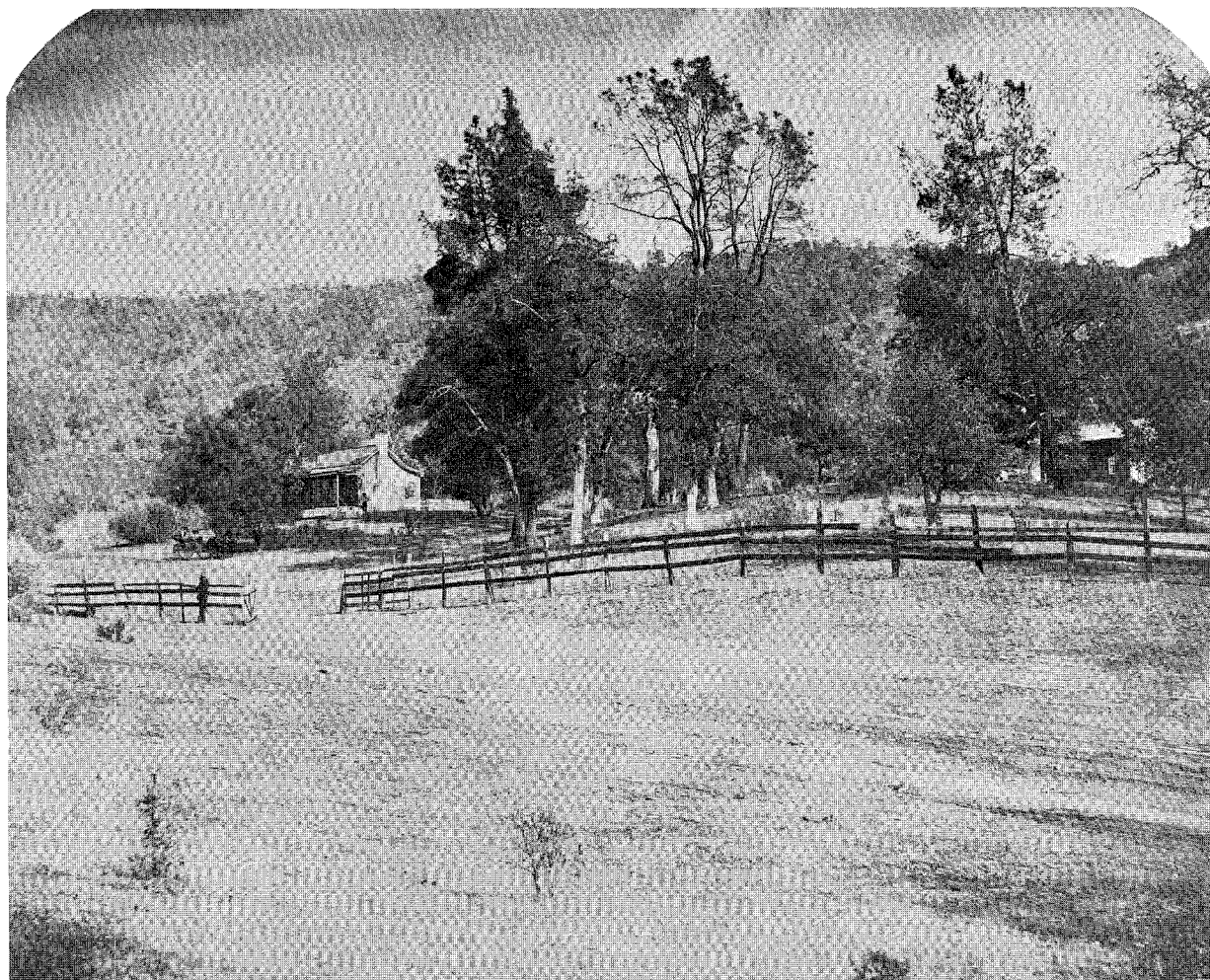
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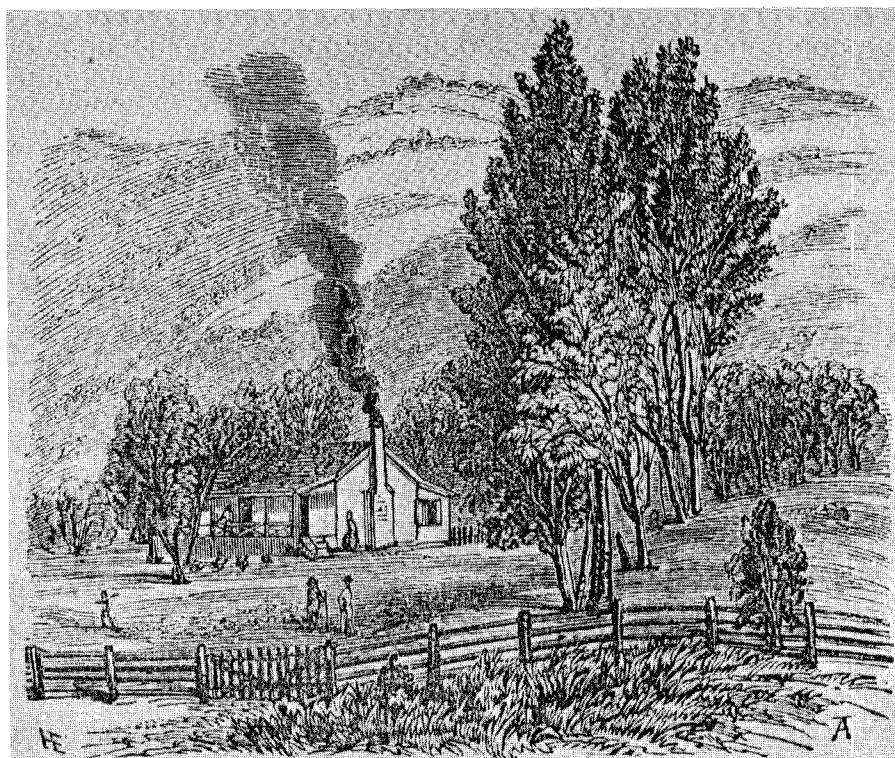


*Watkins' 1858-59 photograph of the Oso Quartz Mill and Mine was the uncredited source for the engraving appearing in Hutchings in 1859. A third engraving, View of the Town of Bear Valley, Mariposa, is taken from the Watkins photograph, Bear Valley from Oso Mine.*

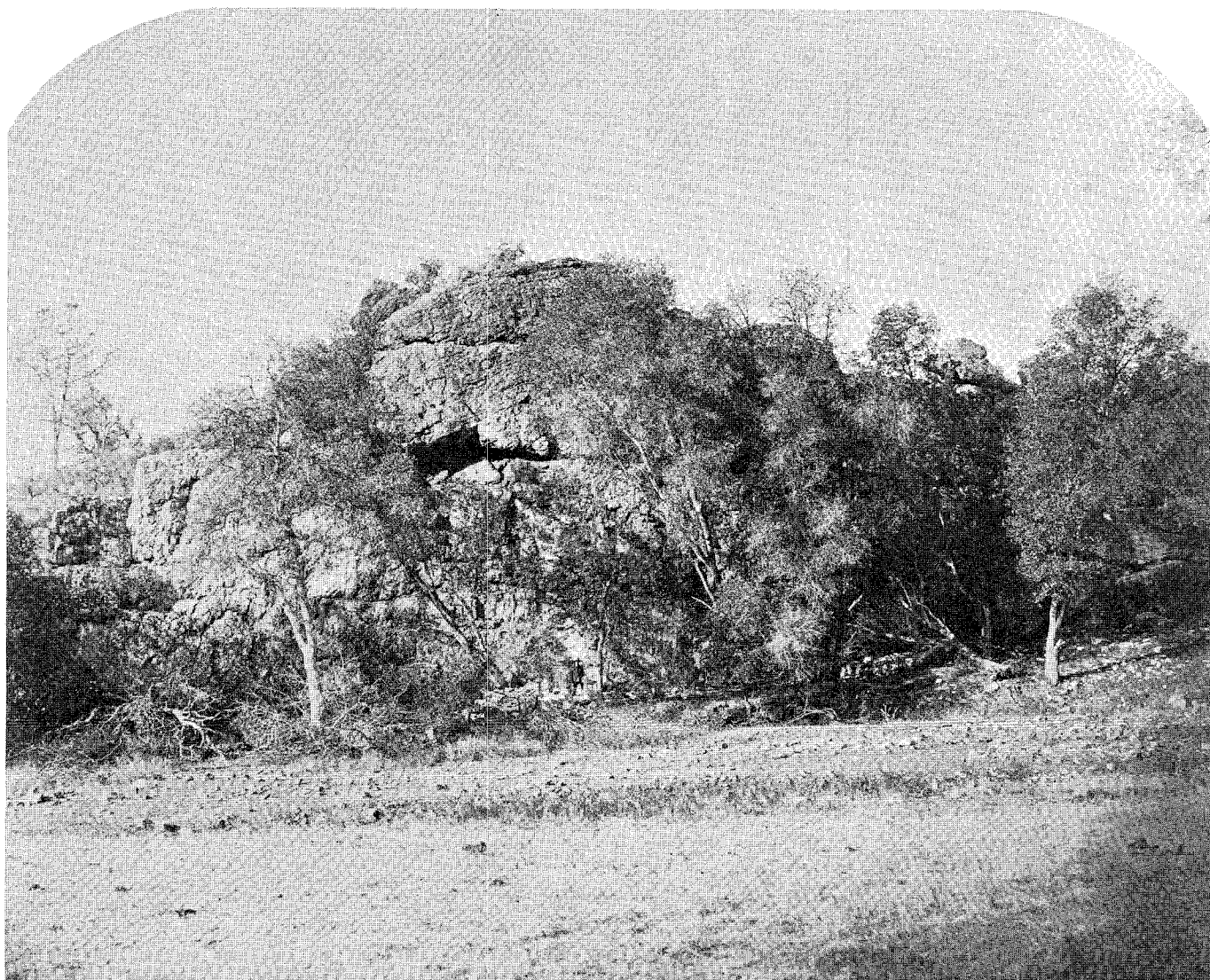




*Watkins photographed Frémont's "modest but lively" Mariposa Estate residence, and his images served as the basis for sketches appearing in Hutchings California Magazine in September, 1859.*





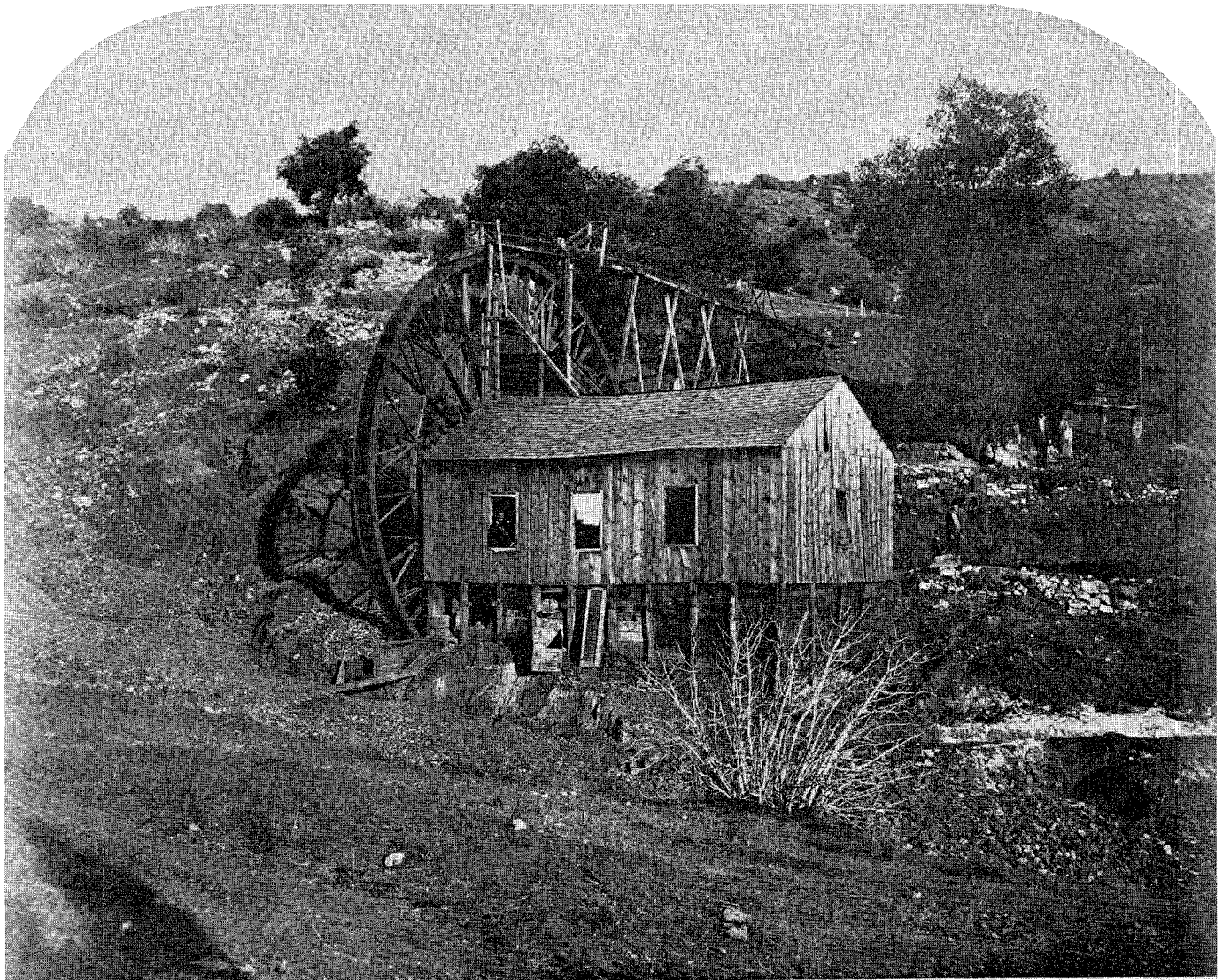


Tower Rock, West View.  
*Watkins' straightforward portrait of a rocky outcropping exhibits the rounded upper corners which characterize his early photographs.*



View from Mt. Josephine N. West.

*An asymmetrical composition  
emphasized the ruggedness of the  
countryside surrounding the mine.*



Mill on Mariposa Creek. Three  
bystanders willingly froze for Watkins'  
roving camera.





clearly predate his Yosemite photographs both technically and artistically. The Mariposa views' technical quality is significantly inferior to that of the Yosemite photographs, and they are more blurred and have much less range in tone. Their finish lacks gloss and appears more like that found on the salt prints done at this time rather than on the albumin prints made by Watkins in 1861. Even granting that Watkins was less inspired by the commissioned subject matter which was not of his personal choosing, most of the photographs barely hint at the beauty found in his later work. As would be expected of largely descriptive pictures, he selected the views more for the number of necessary features which could be fit into the frame than for the compositional possibilities offered.

Despite these limits, Watkins maintained a good balance of elements within the picture, a characteristic which is even more prominent in his later work. The Mariposa series' *View of Road from Silver Trail N. East*, for example, exhibits a sensitivity to the arcs carved by the roads into the hillsides and an ordering of the composition to bring them out. (The technique fails, however, for the arcs do not stand out clearly as light-against-dark.) In *View from Mt. Josephine N. West*, the mine is set at the far right to show it perched on a hillside and to emphasize the huge expanse of hills beyond. *Tower Rock West View* is a straightforward portrait of a geological outcropping similar to Watkins' later tree portraits. (Again, technical problems severely limit Watkins' success; details disappear in the foreground and

the lack of a wide tonal range detracts from the three-dimensionality of his image.) *Tower Rock Looking North* shows the same rock taken from a different angle in a deliberate attempt to make an interesting composition. A large, light (over-exposed, in fact) space occupies the lower-left quadrant, which is balanced by the sage brush at the right and the rock high across the picture. A man seated unobtrusively in the center adds a sense of scale not easily determined without his presence. It is in works like these Mariposa landscapes that we see the beginning of the artistic vision which was to elevate Watkins' reputation only a few years later.

All the illustrations are from the CHS Library.



# The Yosemite Views

A collection of glass stereographs recently made public proves that Carleton Watkins created a broader range of imagery on his first photographic trip to Yosemite than has been previously recognized. The 1861 collection, now at Yosemite National Park, contains seventy-two of the estimated hundred stereographs first published in the series. The very rare glass stereographs are enclosed in a custom-made box<sup>37</sup> bearing the label of the original owner: "Prof. Spencer F. Baird, Asst. Sec'y, Smithsonian Institution."<sup>38</sup>

These photographs substantiate the date offered by Watkins' biographer, Charles Turrill, for Watkins' first Yosemite trip—1861—which few doubted but which was not easily proved.<sup>39</sup> Lady Jane Franklin, the sixty-nine-year-old widow of the explorer Sir John Franklin and an ardent traveler, appears in a few of the views, and it is known that she and her niece, Sophia Cracroft, traveled the Pacific Coast in that year in search of exotic scenery rarely viewed by tourists. Her diary and the local paper document her visit to Yosemite in the summer of 1861.<sup>40</sup>

The Baird Collection of Yosemite views is especially important for the study of Watkins' work because the large number of images makes possible the detection of Watkins' style or styles. Many of these stereographs, like the mammoth-plate (18" x 22") views of the same trip, are straightforward illustrative views of the extraordinary features of Yosemite: Half Dome, Bridal Veil Falls, El Capitan, and others. In these images, Watkins sought to define and reveal the peculiar characteristics of each natural

occurrence which made it unique. He produced many centered frontal views which included just enough space and scenery around the edges to define the objects' shape and position. This approach, taken to an extreme in mammoth views like *The Sentinel* and *Cathedral Rock* (Huntington Library), communicates the monumental nature of the subject. Watkins presents the subject frontally without obstruction, excluding secondary landscape features. Framed tightly within the borders of the picture, the rocky features are further defined by the brilliant light which illuminates their faces.

In *Era of Exploration* Weston Naef and James Wood write that

In 1861 he [Watkins] hesitated to prospect for the point of view to perfectly reveal his subject but rather coyly sighted through trees and over rivers and lakes in a manner typical of the picturesque romanticism Watkins would have seen in European stereoscopic views.<sup>41</sup>

The large number of straightforward views in both stereoscopic and mammoth formats, however, proves this statement incorrect. Watkins did not hesitate to "prospect" in *Cathedral Rock*, although he did make a number of views such as Naef and Wood describe—*Inverted in the Tide Stand the Gray Rocks* (no. 42), for example. The small number of overtly picturesque views—about ten in the Baird Collection and fewer among extant mammoth views—makes clear that this was only one aspect of the work produced at this time (an aspect absent from his later work) and not evidence of "the elementary

picturesqueness of his 1861 work."<sup>42</sup>

There are, in fact, just as many views which show that Watkins conceived his pictures in unpicturesque places. Views like *Between the Yosemite Falls* (no. 13 and no. 14) and *The Pool from the Cliff* (no. 81) are compositions of planes and tones of granite and not the most obvious or artfully contrived subjects. The effects of the receding planes and staggered volumes are even more impressive when viewed through the stereoscope.

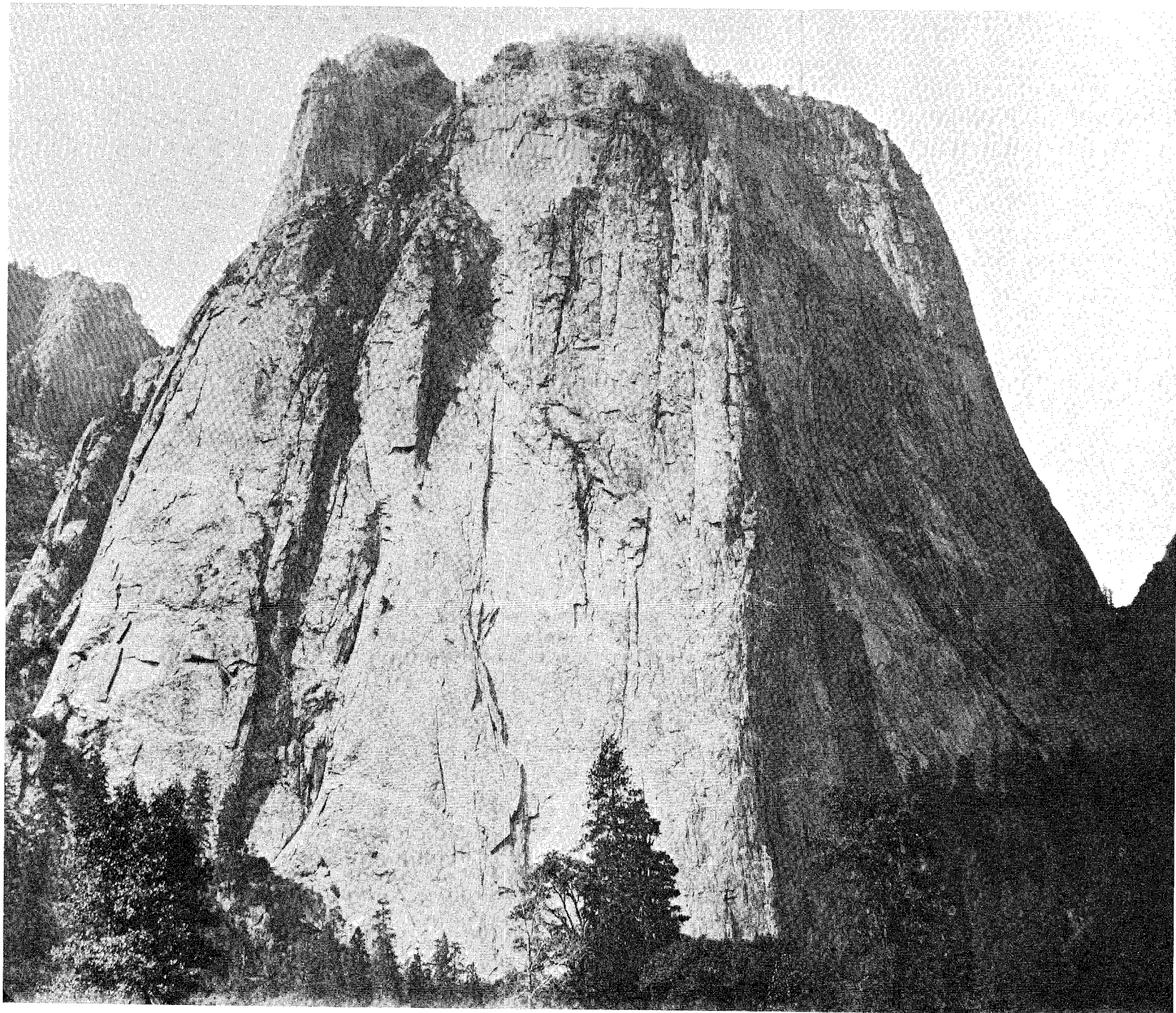
Watkins' 1861 photographs also reveal a tendency (noted by Naef and Wood about his later work) to create abstract designs composed of about five shapes. Four shapes in *Down the Valley* (no. 62) are stacked on a very high horizon line, while the rectangle of the lower-half balances the others. The tree trunks in *El Capitan 3600 ft* (no. 44) function more as graphic interruptions emphasizing the picture plane than as trees within a landscape.

Watkins' stereographs differ from his mammoth views in that the former's focal points are often high in the picture, sighted over the trees of the valley floor. This seems to result both from the narrower angle of the stereoscopic camera lens and from the photographer's limited access to vantage points which allow a clear view of the subject. The stereographs also evidence more variety of subject than the mammoth views. Some are small scenes of meadows and trees with no reference to the grand geological sites. In one view, Watkins showed just the top of Vernal Falls, concentrating on the rushing arc of water rather than on the well-known features

(Continued on page 241)



Cathedral Rock. *Watkins' centered frontal view of the edifice emphasized its monumental presence.*





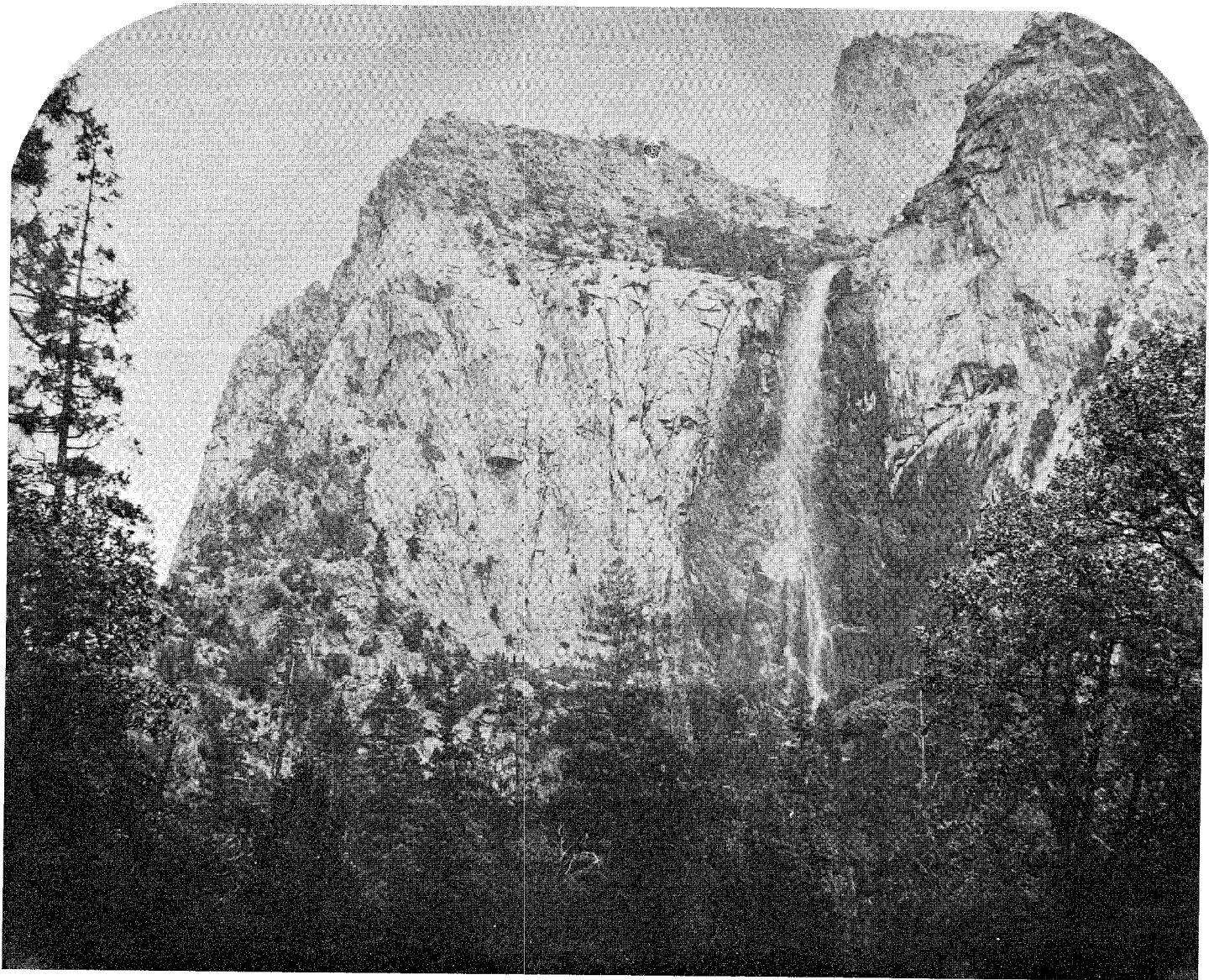


In Camp, Yosemite (no. 3). This glass stereograph showing a comfortable campsite on the Yosemite Valley floor is one of those missing from the Baird Collection at Yosemite.

Lady Franklin and Party. Watkins' presence in Yosemite in 1861 can be proved by his photograph of the Franklin party which toured the West in that year.







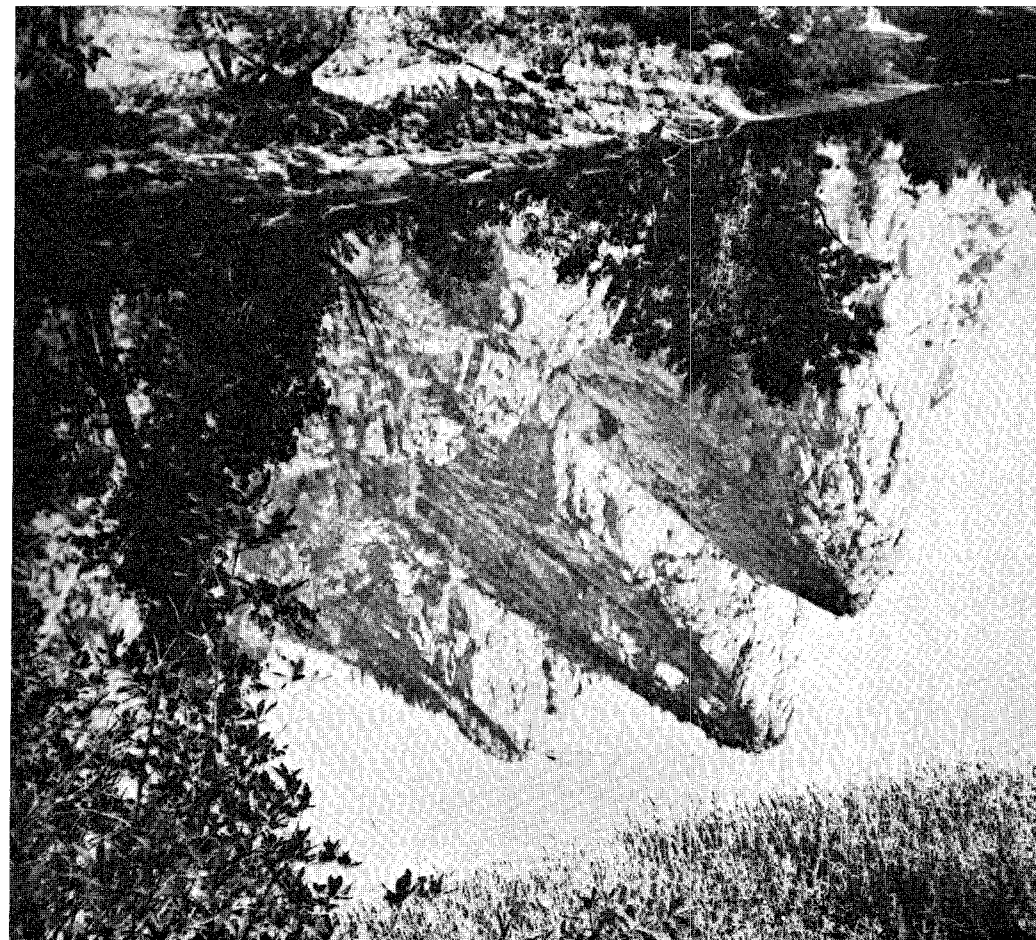
*Taken on the same expedition as the glass stereographs, this mammoth photograph of the falls had rounded upper corners to hide the lens flaw. The trees on the left edge remain distorted by the lens.*





Between the Yosemite Falls. *A composition of planes and tones of granite with no obvious natural center of interest.* Baird Collection #13.





"Inverted in the Tide Stand the Grey Rocks." One of Watkins' few overtly picturesque views. Baird Collection #42.

which had popularized the site. Perhaps the smaller format stereograph camera was easier to handle, and the smaller—and therefore less expensive and fragile—glass negatives were more conducive to experimentation. It could be, too, that Watkins considered stereographs less important and less formal, their value being more as curiosities than works of art. Certainly, Watkins promoted his mammoth views as his major artistic statement. However, the 1861 stereographs appear to have received the same great care as his larger views, both technically and artistically. Printing them on glass rather than on the cheaper but less effective paper was one way Watkins showed his concern with capturing the luminous sharpness of the images. Nanette Sexton's article points out Watkins' obvious concern with exploiting the compositional possibilities

offered by the stereo format to achieve impressive spacial effects. (Watkins did, however, eventually print some of these on paper.)

Watkins' work continues to be judged by his mammoth photographs for several reasons: the gallery format of the mammoth views conforms more to notions of fine art objects than do stereos, which are usually classified as popular art; the difficulty of appreciating the three-dimensional effect of stereos without a stereoscope viewer which few researchers bother to take to collection rooms; and the impossibility of adequately illustrating a discussion of the three-dimensional effects of stereos in the two-dimensional format of his historical journals and exhibition catalogues. As a result the whole discussion is simply avoided.

It is interesting to remember that the

photographs Oliver Wendell Holmes describes as "a perfection of art which compares with the finest European work"<sup>43</sup> were glass stereographs from the same series as the Baird Collection. In fact, J. D. Whitney, in his 1865 report on the United States Geological Survey's work in Yosemite, found that "the glass stereographs taken in the valley, by Mr. Watkins, are in some respects more effective than the photographs."<sup>44</sup> After studying the Baird Collection of stereographs both with and without a stereoscope viewer, this writer enthusiastically agrees.

*In Camp* is from the CHS Library; *Cathedral Rock* is from the Frignet Album, Huntington Library; the others are courtesy the National Park Service, Yosemite Collection.



## Watkins' Style and Technique in the Early Photographs



To study Carleton Watkins' early development as a photographer is to study the beginnings of landscape photography in California. Watkins pioneered in the presentation of the scenic wonders of the land of El Dorado to the eyes of the curious world. Although preceded by other photographers, Watkins' continuous photographic exploration of the picturesque and newsworthy areas of California represents the first conscious effort by a photographer to form a consistent personal style of landscape photography. In so doing, Watkins both worked within and expanded the limitations of the photographic medium as it was known and practiced in San Francisco. In addition, Watkins' early work is significant both in terms of his transition from an early daguerrean operator to a master of the wet-plate process and in the development of his own personal aesthetic.

Watkins began his remarkable photographic career as a daguerrean operator in the San Jose gallery of Robert Vance. The daguerreotypes which Watkins made while employed by Vance have yet to be distinguished among all those which bear the stamp of Vance's gallery.<sup>45</sup> However, later in his career Watkins published in his "New Series" two paper copies of early daguerreotypes which were probably prints from his own early work: one shows Mission Santa Clara near San Jose and the other Mission San Francisco de Asis.<sup>46</sup> The daguerreotype original of Mission Santa Clara can be dated by its architectural features to 1855-1857,<sup>47</sup> coinciding with Watkins' employment in San Jose. Comparison of this view of the mission to his 1880 "New Series" mission photographs suggests that on the basis of stylistic similarities the copied daguerreotype can be attributed to Watkins. The early daguerreotype shows that the rudiments of Watkins' later landscape style were present as early as 1855. The requirements for a successful da-

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*This anonymous daguerreotype of Mission Santa Clara (right) is one of two mentioned in the mission archives as being purchased for \$40 about August, 1854. Although sometimes assigned to Watkins and sometimes to Vance, the early date eliminates Watkins, and Vance was only one of several Bay Area daguerrean artists who could have made the view.*



*The photocopy (below) of an early daguerreotype of Mission Santa Clara was published by Watkins in the 1880's. Its original is probably one of the two daguerreotypes Turrill believed to be Watkins' early work. The original dates after 1855, when the clock was added to the bell tower, and probably before 1857, when the mission acquired its own daguerrean apparatus.*







*Flaws in the plate and in the printing of this early salt print are evident in Watkins' 1859 view of Benton Mills, named after Frémont's father-in-law, Thomas Hart Benton. To date, the Mariposa photographs are the earliest examples of Watkins' use of the wet plate.*

guerreotype—sensitivity to light, texture, and tonal contrast, plus a balanced and clear composition—are all found in what presently is the earliest example of his work.

A comparison of Watkins' daguerreotype and an even earlier anonymous daguerreotype of Mission Santa Clara dated 1852-1854 illustrates Watkins' natural talent for composing a photograph. In the early view, the operator stood just far enough away from the building to include the tip of the bell tower—no further. From this vantage point he included in the foreground just the tops of three fence posts. These three wooden stakes read as undecipherable graphic interruptions in the foreground plane of the picture. Two men, one standing and one seated, occupy the right middle ground of the composition, and the bell tower and church stand in the right half of the background. To the left is a low building and wooden cross. In order to squeeze the entire bell tower into the picture frame, the operator tilted his camera upward, causing a slight distortion in the perspective which makes the bell tower and church appear to lean to the right. In the operator's efforts to record the three main features—the bell tower, the fresco decoration of the church façade, and the two men—he sacrificed the clarity and accuracy of his composition. He also

failed to place the buildings and figures within the context of the surrounding environment and to create a visually interesting composition.

Watkins' daguerreotype, taken no more than three years later, offers a more coherent view of the mission, although his concerns were seemingly similar to those of the earlier photographer. Photographing the buildings with a figure posed in front, Watkins' view encompasses the bell tower, the church, and both flanking buildings. Unlike his predecessor, he placed his camera far enough away from his subject to include the road and the fence in the foreground. The contrasting light and dark tones of the foreground leading up to the now legible fence function as visual stepping stones into the view. Within this setting of contrasting tones, shapes, and textures, Watkins placed the bell tower in the center. To enhance the cubic sense of the tower, he placed his camera on a diagonal line with its corner to show two of the tower's four sides equally. Watkins also illustrated the hall-like longitudinal line of the church, as well as the relationship of the outbuildings to the main church. The lines of the building and the foreground set up a lively rhythm of intersecting diagonals. The flat, textureless tone of the sky is broken up by the central bell tower, the church cross, and the chimneys of the rectory.



Although a new artist in a new discipline, Watkins instinctively realized the potential of his medium. He exploited the daguerreotype's capacity to capture a wide tonal range and to reproduce minute detail and texture. His composition reveals the nature of the architectural elements, their relationship to each other, and the environment. In doing so he created a lively composition full of information and visual incident.

The date when Watkins converted from the daguerreotype process to the wet-collodion process is unclear. A series of views of the Mariposa estate of Colonel John C. Frémont may be the earliest example of Watkins' use of the wet plate, a development which enabled the production of multiple rather than single images. The views were printed on salt paper,<sup>48</sup> and the paper's dull, monochromatic surface results in a lack of textural and tonal contrast in the images. Details and highlights are lost, rendering indistinct the features of the landscape and mining architecture. Many of the defects in these rare prints are often attributed to Watkins' lack of expertise, and indeed the prints are light-streaked and smudged with many imperfections and breaks in the emulsion surface. However, to the careful eye the prints also give good indication of the style that would typify Watkins' mature landscape work.

The Mariposa photographs measure (on the average) 13" x 16"—almost twice the size of the standard whole-plate daguerreotype which Watkins used to make his Mission Santa Clara view. The increased plate size and the rigors of the commission must have presented a challenge to the young photographer.

Watkins' Mariposa views themselves illustrate the photographer's probable *modus operandi*. In the middle-ground of the view, *Carson East*, for example, stands a buckboard and a photographer's traveling darkroom, a black tent. Seated nearby is a man dressed in a dark suit wearing a top hat. This unidentified man is not dressed in work clothes, indicating that Watkins must have labored without an assistant. This man probably drove

Watkins from site to site, indicating to the photographer the subjects he wanted photographed. At each spot, Watkins set up his camera and dark tent to prepare the negative plate. The wet-collodion process demanded the utmost skill in manipulating chemicals.<sup>49</sup> The presence of emulsion cracks, smudges, light streaks, and dust particles demonstrates that Watkins had not yet mastered this technically difficult process.

Watkins frequently took several views at each site, including a panoramic view of the entire area and several closer shots of specific buildings.<sup>50</sup> At Benton Mills he made at least three images: a panoramic view showing the mill and surrounding area, a view of the front façade of the mill, and a view of the back. In the latter Watkins positioned his camera on a nearby hill to get a modified birdseye view. Watkins' choice of viewpoint gives a clear panorama of the mill buildings, eliminating potentially distracting foreground elements. His viewpoint brings out the geometrically interesting interaction between the rectangular platform, the highlighted parallelogram of the mill roof, and the triangular pediment of the adjacent shed. Watkins also captured the subtle integration of the buildings within the landscape to dramatic advantage. The slope of the background hillside echoes the sloping roof lines of the buildings. The brightly sunlit mill roof contrasts sharply with the shadowed hill behind. Finally, the sloping lines of the hill interact with the white sky to create an interesting graphic composition into which the viewer's eye is led by the receding diagonal lines of the planked platform.

The sources for Watkins' style in these early Mariposa views are apparent. His earlier daguerreotype experiences sensitized him to the importance of viewpoint, textural and tonal contrasts, and three-dimensional clues. Tempered by the difficult limitations of the wet plate, Watkins' impulse was to translate the Mariposa landscape into the picturesque-topographical mode of landscape views frequently found in popular illustrated magazines such as *Harpers Weekly*, *Leslies* and *Hutchings*



*California Magazine*. Yet, in all his views of Mariposa, a strong sense of balance and harmony pervades. Although many of the mining building scenes presented little visual challenge, those views which integrated the architectural forms into the landscape demanded ingenuity and an eye sensitive to form.

Watkins' glass stereo and mammoth-plate views of Yosemite dated 1861 represent a great leap forward for the artist technically and stylistically. The nature of the photographic experience Watkins accumulated between 1859 and 1861 is uncertain, but surely it must have been vast. Technically, Watkins graduated from the standard imperial-size plate of the Mariposa views to the mammoth plate, apparently his own invention. Watkins' biographer Charles Turrill states that Watkins had a special camera capable of producing 17" x 21" views made especially for his first trip to Yosemite. The kind of lens he adapted to this large format is unknown. Examination of the mammoth-plate views produced on this trip, however, suggest that he used Thomas Grubb's aplanatic landscape lens which was patented in England in 1857 but rarely used until the early 1860's.

The Grubb lens, known as the Grubb-C, was a great boon to landscape photographers. By reversing the sequence of crown and flint glasses, Grubb decreased the amount of spherical aberration—a drawback of the earlier Chevalier lens—and increased the lens' angle of vision to about 70 degrees.<sup>51</sup> This great increase enabled photographers to shoot large subjects at closer range, eliminating the enforced inclusion of vast foreground areas in the image.<sup>52</sup> The major drawback of the lens was that it produced a curvature of straight lines at the edge of the composition.

Watkins' early mammoth-plate views indicate that he used a wider angle lens than he had for his previous images.<sup>53</sup> The inward curving forms of flanking trees and the frayed focus at the edges display the characteristics associated with the Grubb lens. In spite of the lens' defects, however, the increased flexibility in angle of

view afforded Watkins more latitude to portray the gigantic rock formations of Yosemite Valley.

All thirty mammoth-plate views which Watkins published after his first trip to Yosemite have rounded upper corners. Almost all show deterioration of image quality at the long vertical edges. Perhaps to mask this deterioration, Watkins included flanking trees along the edges of his images whenever possible. The trees also masked another limitation of his photographic process: the collodion emulsion's inability to capture detail in the sky.<sup>54</sup> Flanking trees defined the top edges of pictures, which would otherwise have been only a creamy-white void. An untrimmed rectangular version of Watkins' 1861 view, *Cathedral Spires* (at the California State Library), shows the deterioration and discoloration which Watkins sought to hide by either masking or rounding off the top edges of the print. Although Watkins' biographer states that the photographer only tested his new mammoth camera the day before he set out for his first trip to Yosemite,<sup>55</sup> Watkins' awareness and sophistication in dealing with the limitations of his new camera and the wet-collodion emulsion indicates that he must have had prior experience working with his equipment.

At the same time Watkins worked with the mammoth-plate camera, he produced a stunning series of approximately 100 stereographs of Yosemite. His compositional concerns for composing an effective stereograph were apparently very different from those for a mammoth view, the single most important concern for stereos being the creation of deep space. To do this Watkins was careful to define a strong foreground in his views. The sighting of rocks through trees was an optical device.<sup>56</sup> When viewed through a stereopticon, the effectiveness of foreground trees becomes apparent. The trees form a frame of reference which provides the viewer's first visual step into deep space and establishes an immediate reference point from which the middleground and the distant background can be measured. Without this fore-



ground frame of reference, stereos lose this sense of progression into space. In 1859, at the outset of the stereo craze in America, Oliver Wendell Holmes observed:

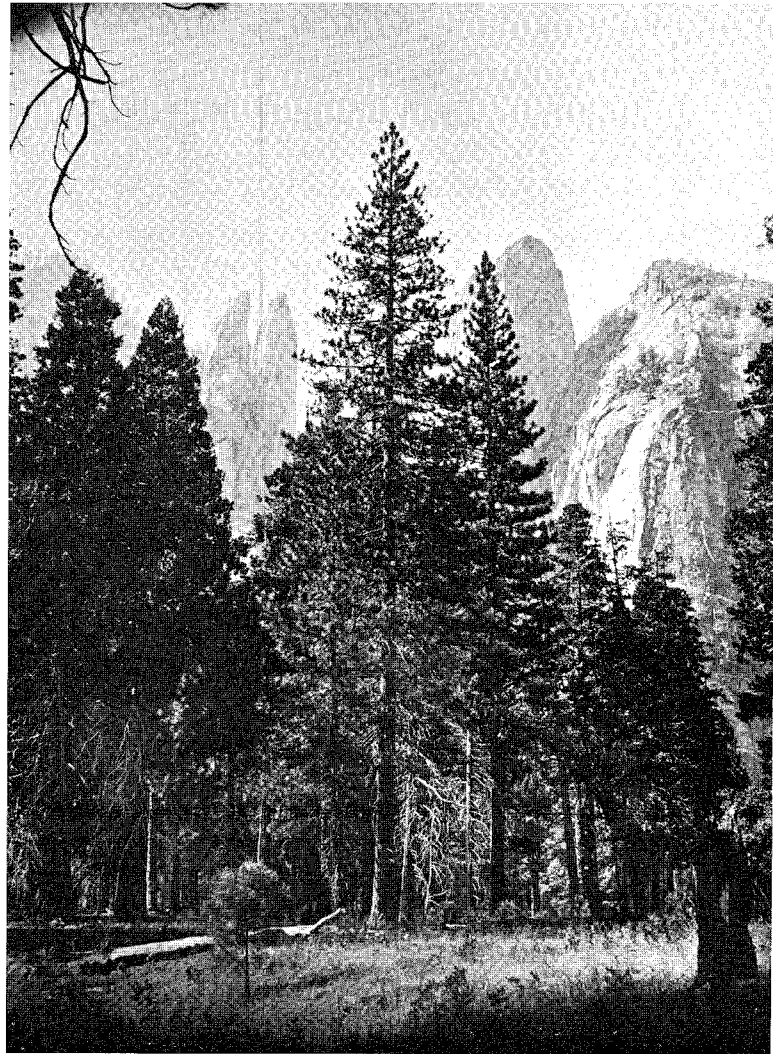
The first effect of looking at a good photograph through the stereoscope is a surprise no painting ever produced. The mind feels its way into the very depths of the picture. The scraggy branches of a tree in the foreground run out at us as if they would scratch our eyes out.<sup>57</sup>

Three years later, upon seeing Watkins' 1861 Yosemite stereos, Holmes was moved to praise Watkins' work in particular as:

"... vigorous in the foreground, delicately distinct in the distance, in a perfection of art which compares with the finest European work."<sup>58</sup>

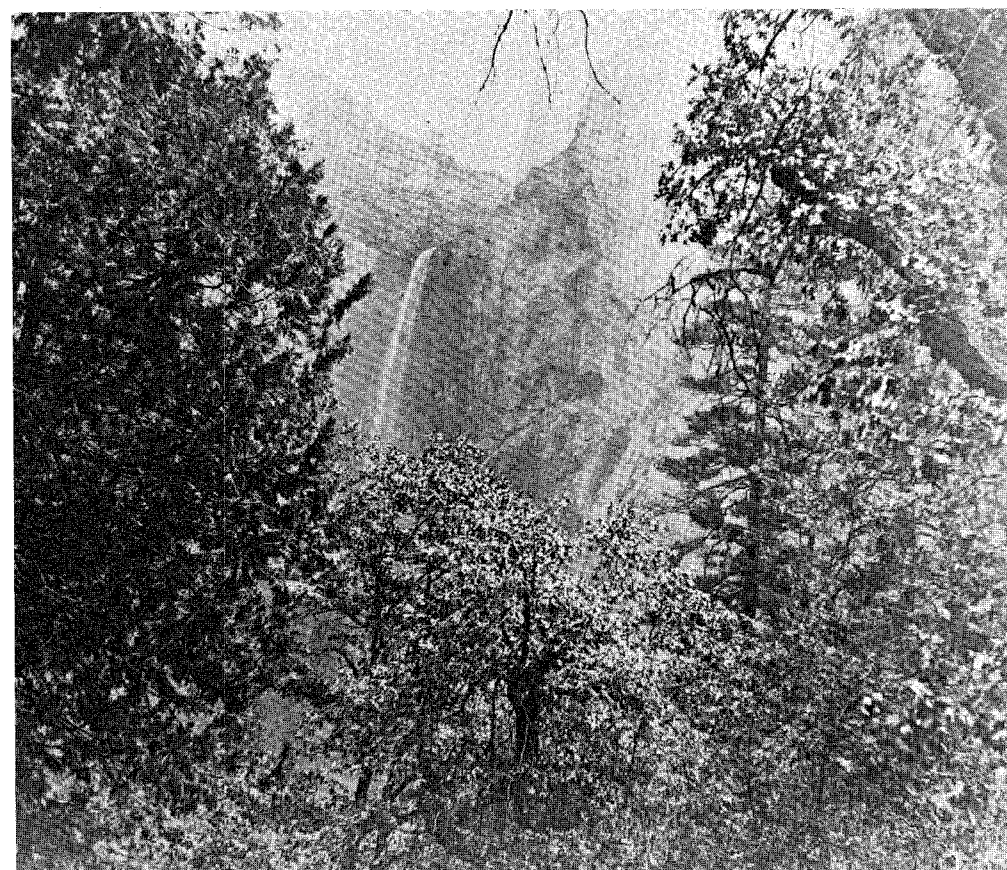
Not all of Watkins' early stereos exhibit this attention to foreground detail. Frequently, in an effort to portray the particular qualities of one of Yosemite's fantastic rock formations, Watkins would eliminate all distracting landscape elements to focus directly on the rock face. Four views of Bridal Veil Falls show his progression from a view of the falls framed by trees to a spare frontal view of the falls alone. The views are numbered consecutively from the most distant view of stereo no. 23 to the close-up view of stereo no. 26,<sup>59</sup> with each successive view giving less sense of space. The fifth view, stereo no. 27, retreats from the stark, flat close-up presentation to a distant shot which includes a meadow in the foreground and trees in the middleground, through which the falls is sighted.

Watkins chose a vantage point similar (though slightly to the right and further back) to that of stereo no. 24 for his mammoth-plate view of Bridal Veil Falls. The shape of the rock formation is completely articulated due to the wider angle of the mammoth-plate camera lens. Watkins created the sense of deep space by including a foreground tree on the left, as he did in the stereo. However, the same deterioration at the edges of the picture and the inward tilt of the trees seen in *Cathedral Spires*

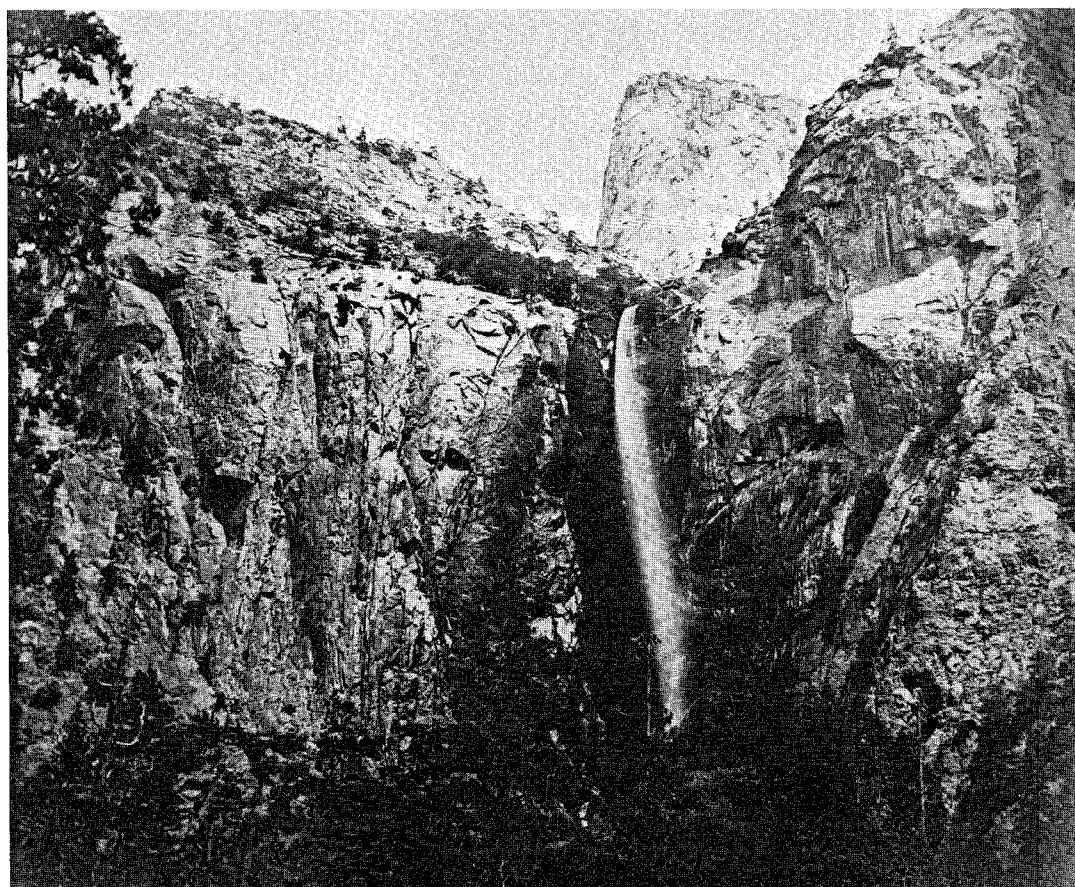


*Cathedral Spires. Darkened corners and edges mark this rare uncut, unmatted 1861 mammoth-plate view of Yosemite rocks. The inferior lens quality which Watkins usually masked is evidenced at the left corner and lower edges of the print.*

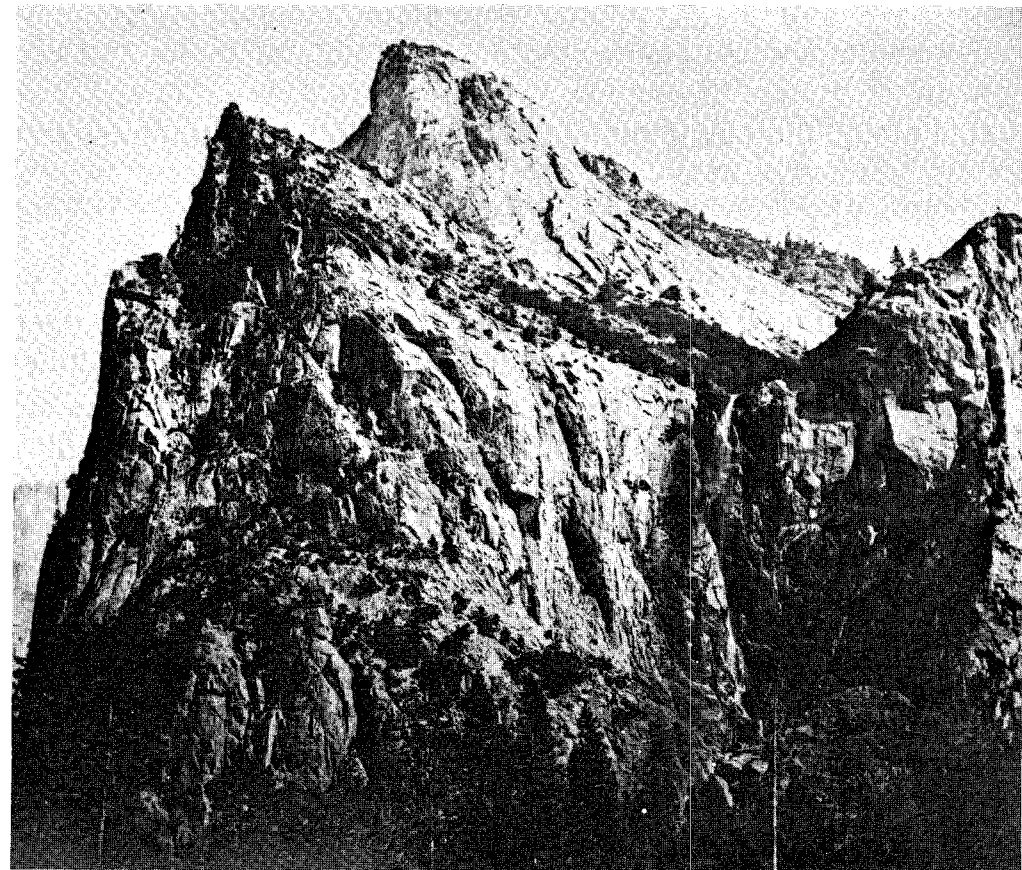




Bridal Veil Falls, 1861. Watkins' glass stereographs nos. 23 (left), 24 (below) and 25 (upper right) progress from a distant to a close-up view, as if the photographer searched for the best perspective. Baird Collection.

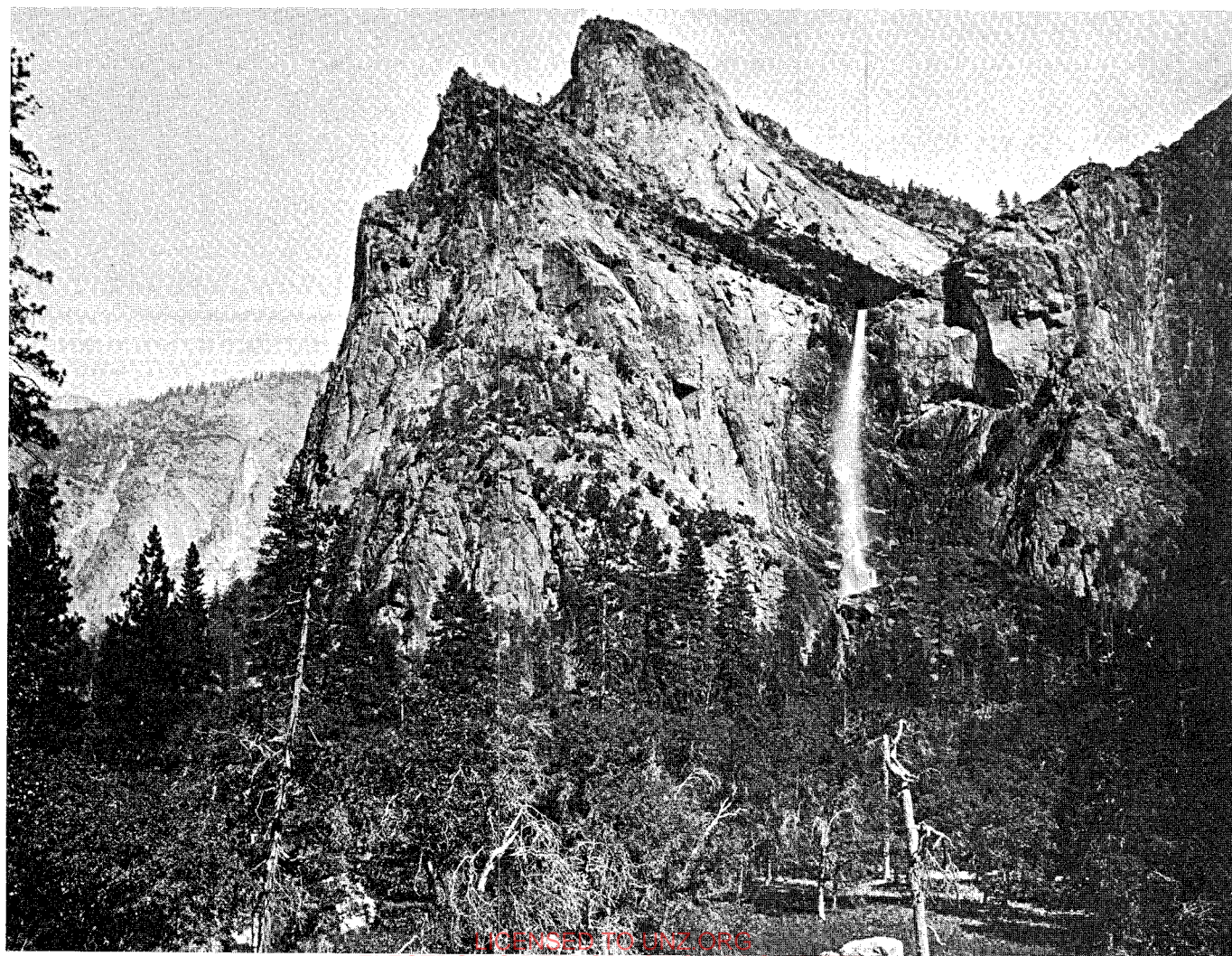






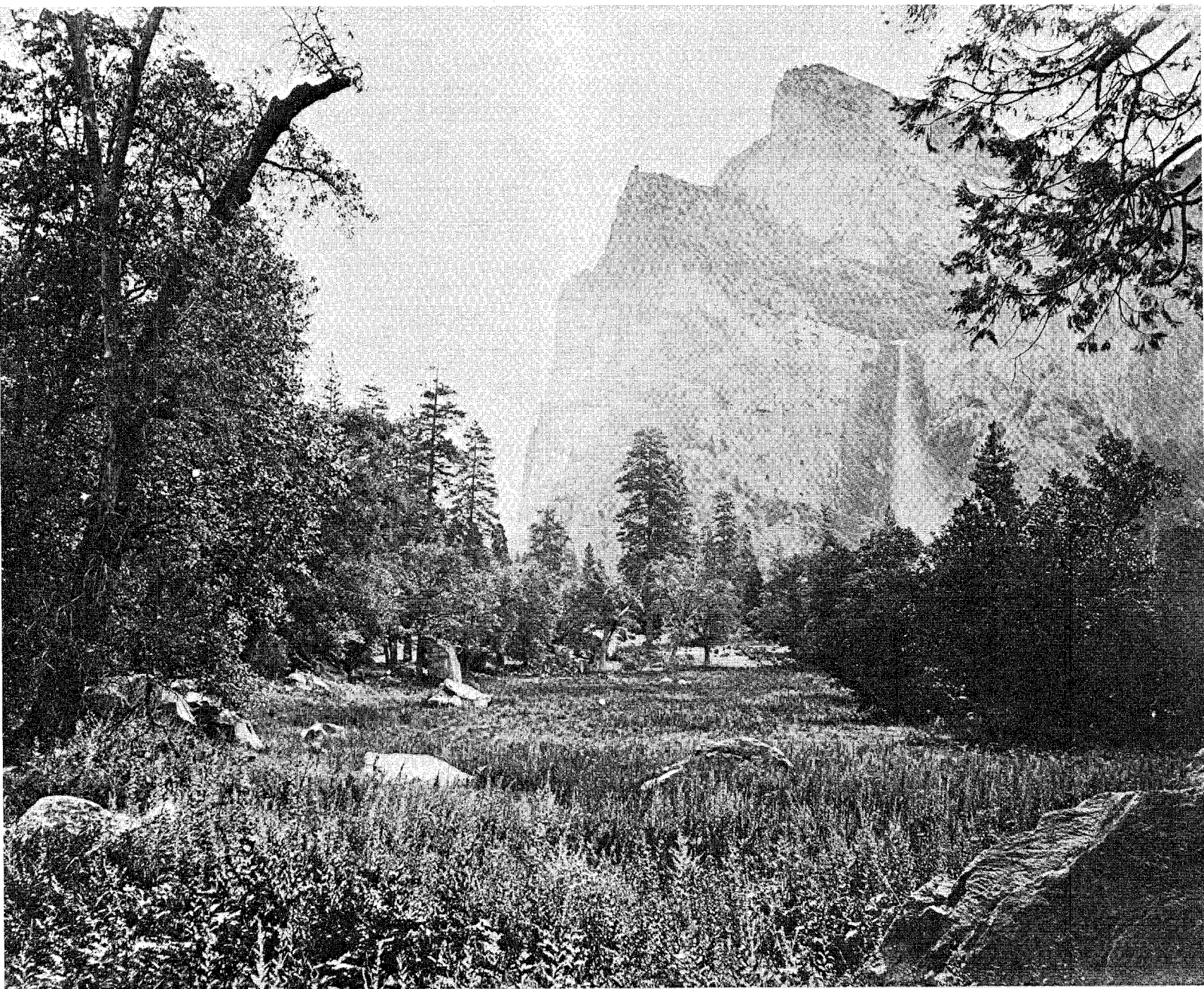
BELOW:

The Bridal Veil from Coulterville Trail.  
*The new Globe lens used for this 1864-65  
view permitted a wider angle of vision and  
did not flaw the image's corners nor distort  
its edges.*





Pohono, the Bridal Veil, Distant View, Yosemite. Taken with the improved Globe lens in 1866, this view became Watkins' most popular photograph of the falls. It displayed Watkins' mastery of the wet-plate medium, his artistic refinement, and his final selection of the best point of view to portray his subject.





are present. Because this view is the only mammoth view of the Bridal Veil which Watkins took in 1861, it must be considered to represent what he judged to be the most successful point of view.

Later, either in 1864 or 1865, Watkins rephotographed the Bridal Veil in the rare mammoth view entitled *The Bridal Veil from Coulterville Trail*.<sup>60</sup> Watkins must have taken this view prior to April, 1866, when it was mentioned in the *Philadelphia Photographer*, a leading photographic journal of the day. Although his vantage point was identical to that of his 1861 stereo no. 25, the wider angle lens includes more of the rock formation and the surrounding landscape. In a short statement in the same article, Watkins mentioned that he used a Globe lens to make the image. This new landscape lens patented in 1861 was revolutionary in that it provided a vastly wider angle of view and cast a larger circle of light onto the sensitized negative plate. Consequently, round upper corners were no longer required to mask the deterioration of the focus and strength of light, and the trees were straight and detailed even at the sides.<sup>61</sup>

Even though his second mammoth-plate version of the Bridal Veil overcame the earlier distortion and defects of the 1861 view, Watkins was still not satisfied. Later, probably in 1867 when he was asked by Josiah Dwight Whitney, Geologist for the State of California, to photograph views for his publication, *The Yosemite Book*, Watkins produced yet another view of the Bridal Veil. This view, titled *Pohono, The Bridal Veil, Distant View, Yosemite*, became by far the most popular with the public. Watkins included it in all his large presentation albums of Yosemite, and it is the most prevalent view found in photographic collections today. This third version represents a synthesis between the two styles present in his early 1861 stereo views—the falls seen through framing trees and landscape or the falls in a straight, frontal, close-up version. Watkins accomplished both the presentation of the geological formation and the depiction of the surrounding landscape to produce one view

full of the grace and charm of this delicately named natural wonder.

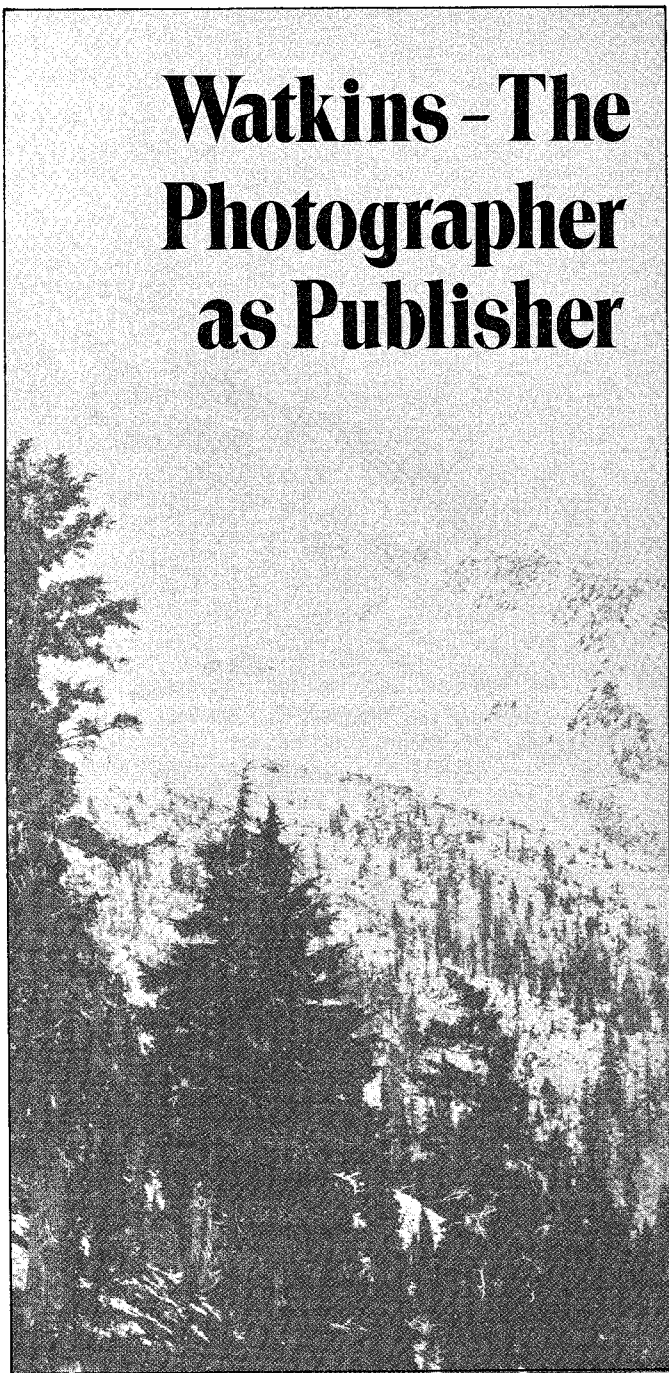
A closer view of the falls, almost identical to the smaller version (6¼"x8") made for Whitney's book, is the vertical mammoth plate, *Pohono, the Bridal Veil*. In this view, Watkins produced a clear, straightforward picture of the falls, yet he avoided the starkness of the earlier close-up photographs. The wide angle of the Globe lens<sup>62</sup> made possible a close, ground-level vantage point, whereas the lens used in the earlier views required an elevated, distant vantage point. In this view the falls are seen from across the meadow and through the surrounding brush without distortion. The image's marked sense of space and progression offers an improvement to the flat and claustrophobic earlier versions.

By 1867 Watkins had photographed Yosemite Valley at least four times. His strong impressions of its geological wonders and his ability to capture these impressions with his improved technical equipment linked his reputation closely with the region. Capitalizing on this recognition, Watkins opened his Yosemite Art Gallery, and his gallery was considered a "must" for all visitors to San Francisco. By so naming his gallery, Watkins acknowledged his debt to his earliest training ground. It was the challenge of photographing the Yosemite Valley which disciplined his process—both technical and artistic—into a personal style which would characterize his work for his entire photographic career. His style confirmed, Watkins continued for the next two decades to produce stunning images of Yosemite and the scenic wonders of the West.

The early photo of Mission Santa Clara is courtesy the Archives, University of Santa Clara; the 1855-57 photo, courtesy Huntington Library, San Marino. *Cathedral Spires* is courtesy the California State Library, Sacramento. *Bridal Veil from Coulterville Trail* is from the Western American Collection, Yale University; *Pohono* is from Gray's Herbarion Library, Harvard University. The other photos of the falls are from the National Park Service, Yosemite Collection.



## Watkins - The Photographer as Publisher



Highly esteemed as a photographic artist, Carleton Watkins also played a seldom-discussed role as a publisher of western photography. During his long and productive career as an artistic photographer, he was often published, and sometimes victimized, by other photographers and publishers. Watkins, in turn, published not only his own work, but that of A. A. Hart and Louis Heller. This activity placed him in head-on competition with many of the best photographic publishers in America, including Thomas Houseworth & Company, E. & H. T. Anthony, Bradley & Rulofson, the Kilburn brothers, and J. J. Reilly. In the early years, Watkins had formed brief business alliances with several of them; by the late 1860's he sought to join their ranks. Unhappily, as his biographer has noted, he proved "more of an artist than a businessman,"<sup>68</sup> and he was to suffer severe distress, including a bankruptcy, for his efforts.

The establishment of Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery in 1867 appears to mark the beginning of his determination to commercially control and guarantee authorship of his own photographs. Capitalizing on the international acclaim won by his mammoth-plate Yosemite views, Watkins wished to elevate his artistic efforts to a clearly distinctive status. In part, he envisioned himself as the manager of a fine arts gallery in which he would be an important arbiter of artistic standards for landscape photography. For the first time he began religiously to sign his name, assign negative numbers, and affix typeset legends and copyright information to his work.

While Watkins' giant Yosemite views were the featured attraction of his gallery, he counted on commercial stereograph production to provide much of the day-by-

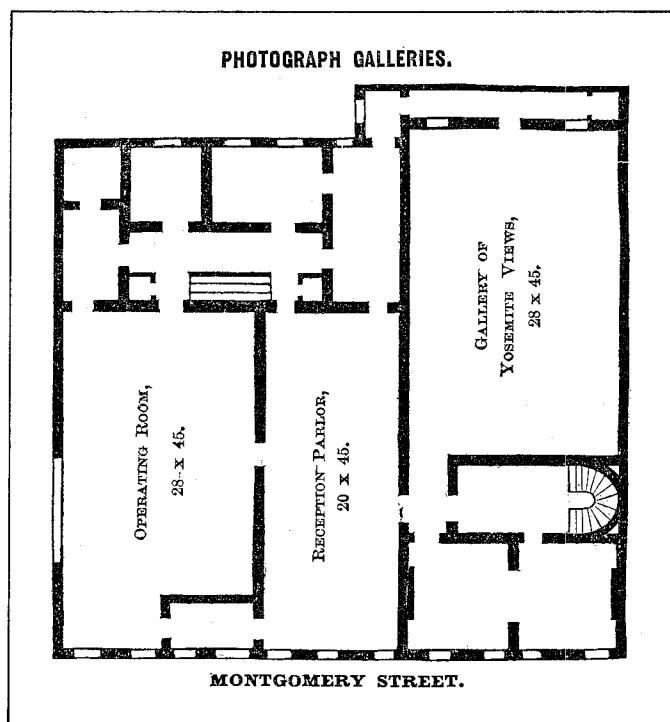
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Peter Palmquist is a photographer at Humboldt State University, Arcata, and the author of several books and articles on early California photographers. He recently organized the exhibition "Photographers of the Humboldt Bay Region, 1850-1978," based on his years of collecting and research into the regional photography of Northern California.



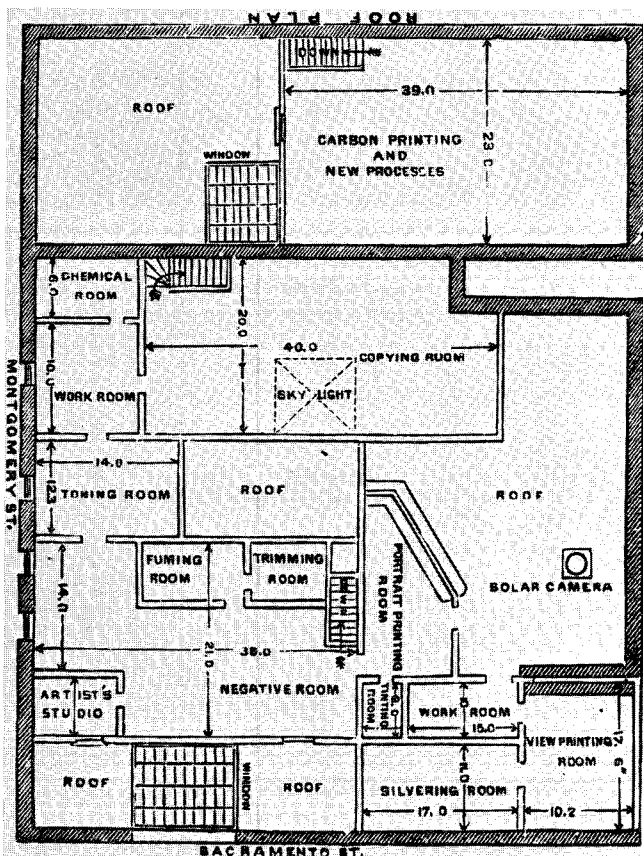
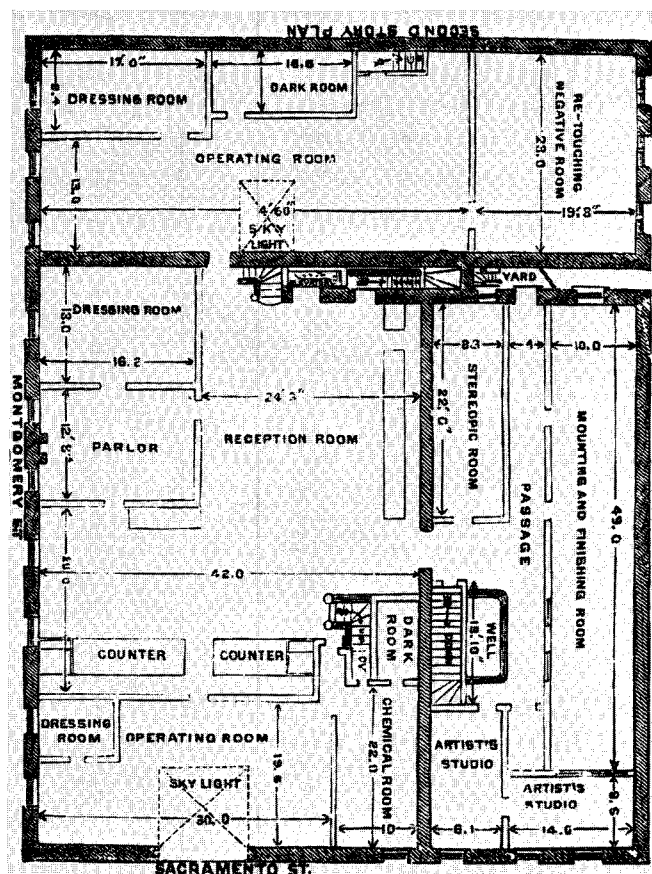
Watkins' major San Francisco competitor, Bradley & Rulofson, occupied a two-floor, twenty-nine-room structure with 11,000 square feet of floor space (right) at Montgomery and Sacramento streets. The firm employed 34 people.

Although Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery (below) served as a showplace for his photographs, it was inadequate for volume production. Some 3500 of the gallery's 5200 square feet was devoted to public areas.

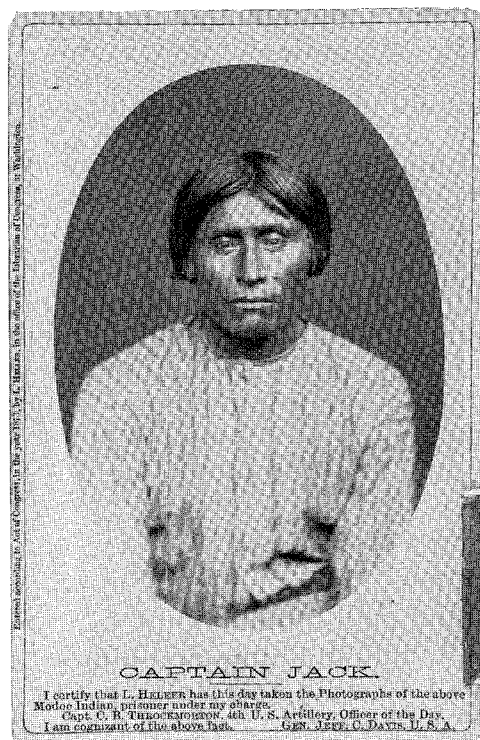


day financial wherewithall. The economics of successful stereographic publishing demanded efficient, high-volume production, and Watkins was all too soon engrossed in aspects of the trade for which he lacked essential business discipline.

The stereographic-view trade had long been dominated by such large eastern establishments as E. & H. T. Anthony & Co. The beginning of the 1870's, however, saw many regional photographers adopt the stereograph as a profitable adjunct to their regular gallery operations.<sup>64</sup> In the West this influx of local stereo production succeeded in breaking the monopoly of the eastern publishers. Thus, one historian estimates, by 1879 between 12,000 and 15,000 different stereograph titles had been marketed in California alone.<sup>65</sup> Views of Yosemite and the Big Trees areas were easily the most popular in the West, rivaling the seemingly innumerable reproductions of America's most famous vista, Niagara Falls.<sup>66</sup>



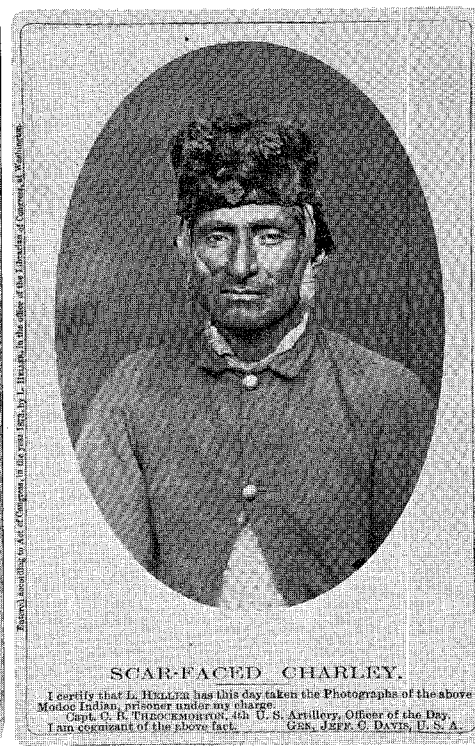




CAPTAIN JACK.

I certify that L. HELLER has this day taken the Photographs of the above  
Modoc Indian, prisoner under my charge.  
Capt. C. R. THROCKMORTON, 4th U. S. Artillery, Officer of the Day.  
I am cognizant of the above fact. GEN. JEFF. C. DAVIS, U. S. A.

# 1847 4687  
You are most cordially invited, together with your friends,  
to visit  
**Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery.**  
(PORTRAIT AND LANDSCAPE.)  
22 and 26 Montgomery St., opposite Lick House Entrance,  
UP STAIRS,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.  
The Photographic Portraits, of every style, are prepared by  
day in San Francisco, and our collections of Landscapes, Views,  
Views, Panoramas, and Intermediate Views, embracing Yosemite  
Valley, Mammoth Trees, Geysers, Mount Shasta, Oregon, Columbia  
River, Pacific Railroad, Coast, Mining, City, etc., will, we  
feel assured, give you pleasure to examine, as it will do to extend  
to your every country to our home.  
Respectfully Yours,  
G. E. WATKINS,  
Portrait and Landscape Photographer.  
**ENGLISH OPINION.**  
The Art Journal, August, 1874.  
But in all that has depended on human art, he has been most  
successful, especially in the selection of pictorial points of view,  
as well as in the delicate manipulation which is necessary to give  
true scope to the magic chemistry of light. Between the wonders  
of Nature and the skill of man, we have never seen before in these  
views of the Yosemite Valley, the finest photographs that have  
been sent in Europe. It is no small satisfaction to us to be able to  
bear this testimony to the work of an American artist. To the lovers  
of Nature, in her most sublime aspects, as well as to the collectors  
of what is most rare and perfect in photography, we can recommend  
no higher treat than will be purchased by the purchase of Mr.  
Watkins' photographs of the Valley of the Grizzly Bear.  
**AMERICAN OPINION.**  
The New York Herald Tribune, April 22, 1874.  
So far as Mr. Watkins, in his pictures of California scenery, he  
makes a close artistic study of the attitudes of Nature, and the various  
lights of the day, and gives himself, his instruments, and his  
chemicals, the advantage thereof, with the result of as perfect little  
pictures as can be made in the foreground effect, as painter over rather  
through his artistic perception and his ingenious grouping of the  
beauty of nature.  
The only Medal awarded in the Paris Exposition for  
California Photography.  
Stereoscopic Views, \$1.50 Per Doz.



SCAR-FACED CHARLEY.

I certify that L. HELLER has this day taken the Photographs of the above  
Modoc Indian, prisoner under my charge.  
Capt. C. R. THROCKMORTON, 4th U. S. Artillery, Officer of the Day.  
I am cognizant of the above fact. GEN. JEFF. C. DAVIS, U. S. A.

While Watkins' landscape views continued to be popular, Yosemite did not stay especially linked to his name for long. Competing Yosemite views by photographers such as Charles Weed, the Bierstadt brothers, T. C. Roche, John P. Soule, B. W. Kilburn, Eadweard Muybridge, and others diluted the market. Public demand for landscape stereos soared during the early 1870's, forcing an industry-wide scramble for new and more diverse titles. The larger publishing houses met this need by hiring more photographers, or through leasing or purchasing negatives from free-lance professionals.<sup>67</sup> Watkins sought diversity by purchasing stereograph negatives of the Central Pacific Railroad taken by a Sacramento-based artist, A. A. Hart,<sup>68</sup> and he had already broadened his inventory with many new views of the Pacific Northwest, especially his Oregon and Washington landscapes which he copyrighted in 1867. Others were added during his 1870 excursion to the Mount Lassen-Mount Shasta area of Northern California when he accompanied Clarence King's Fortieth Parallel Survey.

After the trip to Oregon and Washington, Watkins began to issue his own "Pacific Coast" series. Presumably, he hoped to compete with other commercially marketed sets such as Houseworth's "Scenery on the Pacific Coast."

Watkins probably obtained the Central Pacific Railroad negatives in 1870, not long after Hart's untimely death. The 364 negatives in this group show the progress of the rail construction as well as many vistas of the surrounding countryside.<sup>69</sup> Watkins immediately offered these views under his own name, but he retained Hart's negative numbering and titling.

The acquisition of Hart's railroad views was especially important to Watkins. The newly-built transcontinental railroad brought a steady stream of travelers to the West, and these tourists eagerly purchased photographic views picturing the same terrain that they had observed from their coach windows. Houseworth, Bradley & Rulofson, J. J. Reilly, and even E. & H. T. Anthony all actively competed for this market which Watkins hoped to dominate. In 1873, Watkins traveled to Utah to produce additional railroad views to add to his growing selection.

In 1873, Watkins also obtained a small but important group of negatives depicting the Modoc Indian War from Louis Heller of Fort Jones, California.<sup>70</sup> After a short stint of self-publishing, Heller apparently sought out Watkins to mass-produce his images. On June 25, 1873, the *Yreka Journal* reported that the photos were being "finished in good style at Watkins' establishment on Montgomery Street, San Francisco, 20 women and a



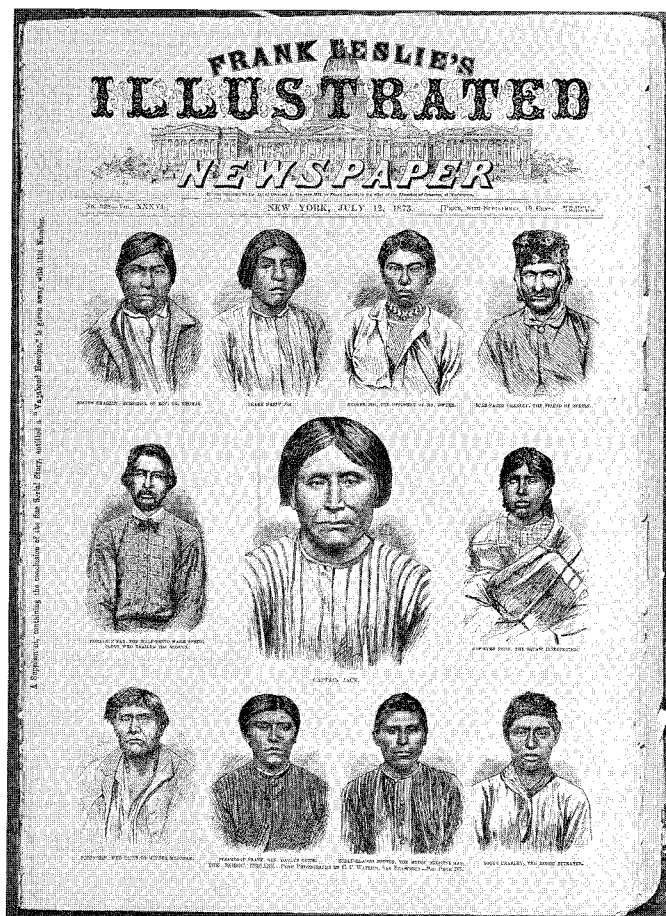
Indian leader Captain Jack and other Modoc War prisoners including Scar-Faced Charley were photographed by Louis Heller and published by Watkins. The verso of the prisoner photographs carried Watkins' advertisement. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper of July 12, 1873, ran engravings taken from these images, which the magazine credited to Watkins. Only the Yreka Journal's July 2, 1873, advertisement acknowledged Heller as the photographer.

number of Chinamen being kept constantly at work. . . .” Soon thereafter, Watkins issued Heller's stereographs on his “Watkins' Pacific Coast” cards, including Heller's name on the mount. These views proved especially important to Watkins' portfolio because of the great public interest created by this controversial and bloody conflict in Northern California. Moreover, his principal competitor, Bradley & Rulofson, was publishing similar images by their ace photographer, Eadweard Muybridge.

From 1867 until 1875, Watkins seems to have been prosperous.<sup>71</sup> In 1872 he moved to an elegant new facility at 22-26 Montgomery Street, advertising this gallery widely and flamboyantly. The 1872 San Francisco city directory carried a splashy, full-page notice, and the *Buyers Manual and Business Guide* of the same year praised Watkins' facilities as “one of the largest and most finely fitted-up photography galleries on this continent.” It further reported:

The walls of the room, called the Yosemite Art Gallery, are adorned with one hundred and twenty-five of those superb views of Pacific Coast Scenery (in size 18x22 inches). . . . Here also may be found stereoscopic views by the thousand—views in Oregon; views on the Central Pacific Railroad; views of Yosemite's wonders; views of almost everything curious, grand or instructive. . . . Mr. Watkins has placed all this luxury and elegance; all of these sources of refined and rational enjoyment at the disposal—not only of his immediate patrons, but the public at large. . . . In one thing only will the stranger be disappointed, perhaps; receiving first-class work produced by first-class mechanical appliances; he may expect to pay exorbitant prices. . . .<sup>72</sup>

This last statement had ominous portent for the fortune of Watkins' establishment. In 1876, the San Francisco city directory failed to publish a notice about Watkins, and an advertisement appeared that indicated that I. W. Taber had become the owner of Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery. Charles Turrill, a close friend of Watkins in his later years, reported that Taber had loaned Watkins money, subsequently foreclosing on the loan when Watkins was out of town. Turrill further indicated



**New, This Week.**

---

**Capt. Jack and his Warriors**

COMPLETE SETS,

**Photographed from life  
by L. Heller,**

Just Received from WATKINS' YOSEMITE  
GALLERY, San Francisco.

**Price \$4 Per Dozen.**

**For Sale by RAYNES & PYLE,**

Sole Agents for Siskiyou County.

Also, Stereoscopic Views of Lava Bed,  
Camp Scenes, etc.



Watkins advertised his medal won at the  
Paris International Exposition in  
1868 on the back of his stereo views  
and in the city directory.

Advertising in the 1876 city directory for  
San Francisco, I. W. Taber and Co.  
controlled Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery.  
Taber reduced prices to undercut the strong  
competition in the city.

**SPHERICAL!**  
**SPHERICAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

THIS DESIGN, FOR BEAUTY and STYLE,  
SURPASSES EVERYTHING in the PHOTOGRAPHIC ART.

ORIGINATED BY  
**I. W. TABER & CO.**  
**1876.**

THE WELL-KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER, **I. W. TABER**, came to this coast 11 years ago, under an engagement with Bradley & Rulofson. For seven years he was the head operator of that establishment. The past few years he has held a like position with G. D. Morse. The public know of the success of these leading Galleries during his connection with them, having produced the most beautiful Photographs made on this coast, he being the author of *The Promenade* and many other styles which have been so popular. Being at the head of the profession, he has by steady application to business taken more Photographs than any other artist on this coast. His inventive genius and ability have done more than that of any other to secure for California the pride of producing the best Photographs in the world.

**ANNOUNCEMENT.**—He has now, in connection with T. H. Boyd (who is also a fine operator), secured the most desirable gallery in San Francisco. The rooms are spacious and elegantly furnished with every convenience. The skylight room is the finest in the State. The light is so arranged that the operator can secure those beautiful results of light and shade so desirable for artistic work. With these advantages he is enabled to produce better Photographs than heretofore, at **Thirty per cent. Less Price.** Cabinets, formerly \$10 and \$12 per dozen, will be furnished at \$6 and \$7 per dozen. Pictures of children taken by the extra quick working camera—always successful. As Mr. Taber and Mr. Boyd intend doing their own operating, they can make this reduction, and each will take a pride in producing the Finest Photographs ever made in this city. The gallery is central to all the leading hotels and horse-car routes in the city, being directly opposite the Lick House door. Remember,

**I. W. TABER & CO.,**  
**YOSEMITE ART GALLERY,**  
24, 26 and 28 Montgomery St., opp. Lick House.

MR. WATKINS' Celebrated Yosemite Views Department is connected with this establishment, making it the most interesting gallery to visit on the Pacific Coast.

that Taber acquired all of the assets of Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery, including negatives and photographic equipment.<sup>73</sup> Shortly, Taber began to issue Watkins' early Yosemite views under his own name. Many pictures included in Taber's publications such as *The Monarch*, *Souvenir of Sunset City*, and *Sunset Scenes*, views which were issued in fifteen portfolios at the time of San Francisco's 1884 Midwinter Fair, were photographed by Watkins.<sup>74</sup>

Some years later, Watkins bitterly recalled this loss of his prized negatives:

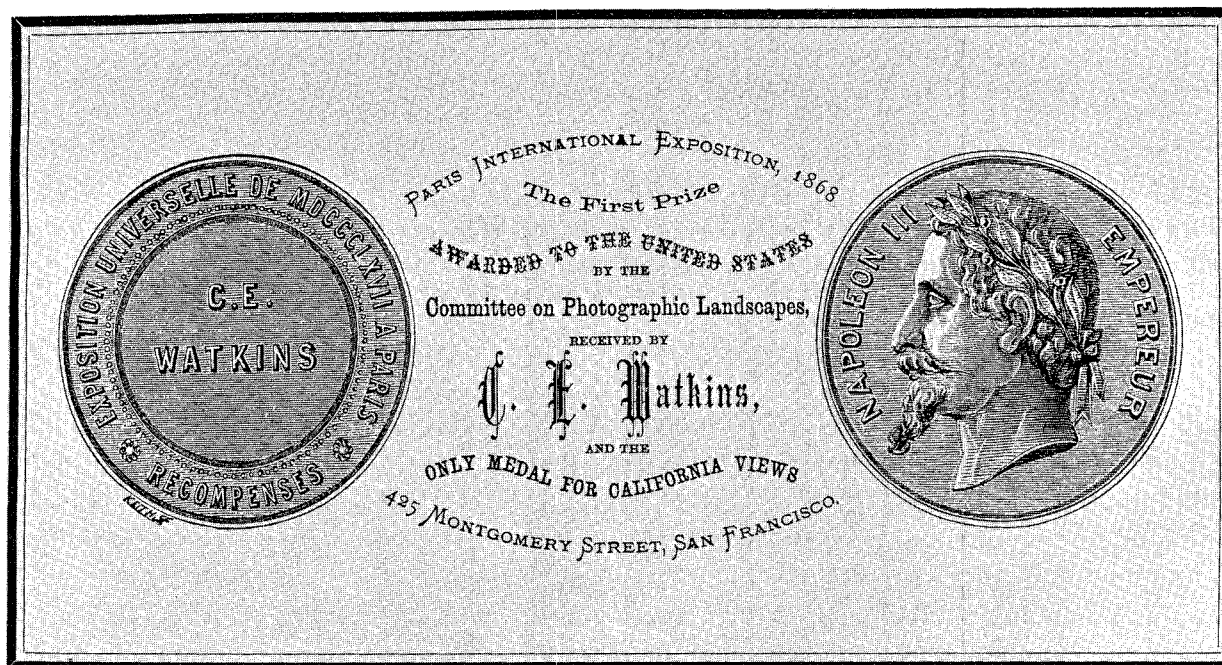
The old negatives are gone . . . as well as everything else that I had. In other words that d--- thief of a crook has got everything away from me, and I don't propose to cry about it, but to give him ----. Well, I am going to stay with him for the balance of my life.<sup>75</sup>

The circumstances surrounding Watkins' loss indicates that he had financially overextended himself at a particularly bad time. Not only had his gallery expansion been expensive, but it had coincided with the intense ballyhoo which had accompanied the introduction of Eadweard Muybridge's mammoth Yosemite views. Photo historian Weston Naef also speculates that "Watkins' future was seriously damaged by the pattern of (public) demand. He was by temperament a risk taker . . . preferring to take photographs he perceived as beautiful rather than those which were good commercial prospects."<sup>76</sup> Perhaps of even greater consequence, a financial depression held San Francisco in its grip.

Although severely damaged by the Taber incident, Watkins began the slow process of rebuilding. He now undertook to produce and publish a completely new set of titles which he called "Watkins' New Series." Re-photographing many of his best known Yosemite views, he also made new studies of that region. In addition he sought a much wider selection of subject matter and ranged widely throughout California, recording native plants, landforms, ethnic peoples, missions, and views of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Later he photographed in Arizona and traveled as far north as British Columbia in search of diversity.<sup>77</sup>

Watkins' undertaking was monumental, not only because of the immense task of obtaining a new inventory, but because commercial photography was also undergoing many changes. Competition in stereograph production had become increasing severe, and mass production, pirating, and sub-standard quality raised havoc with prices. During the 1860's and early 1870's Watkins





sold his stereoscopic views in a cloth-covered box for \$5 per dozen.<sup>78</sup> By 1873, these same stereographs were selling for \$1.50 per dozen.<sup>79</sup> Writing in the *Philadelphia Photographer* in 1874, California photographer J. J. Reilly complained:

Fine work is not appreciated by the public in stereoscopic views. The man who can furnish the cheapest sells most without regard to quality. . . . I used to get \$24 per gross for stereoscopic views some eight years ago at Niagara, and two years ago \$24 per gross for views of the Yosemite valley, and today I can get barely half that. It is not because my views are poorer, for they are at least fifty percent better, but the men who handle them say, 'I can buy views from Mr. A. at \$12 per gross, and why do you ask more?' Why? because my views are better. 'Yes, but the public don't see any difference. . . .'<sup>80</sup>

Watkins' discouragement with the public's fickleness and lack of standards is nowhere more apparent than in a letter he wrote in 1880 to his new wife, Frances Sneed, in which he expressed the cut-throat nature of the business:

When a customer comes in your place, get all you can in the way of price but don't let one go on account of price. Sell all you [can] for all you can get. That is the rule of all other dealers in my goods, and I have stood out for a good price to my own detriment long enough. This year give 'em h--- with their own shot.<sup>81</sup>

Watkins' letter reflects the disillusionment of a man whose self-esteem had been badly damaged by his

repeated failure to receive just return for his artistic efforts. While he appears to say, "If you can't beat them, join them," it is a fact that his production quality remained consistently high throughout his life. Seemingly, he could not allow shoddy craftsmanship to carry his name.

Watkins continued to produce his second series amidst numerous difficulties, including competition from his own early Yosemite views held by Taber. The San Francisco city directories list Watkins as being the manager of the Watkins Yosemite Art Gallery until at least 1890, but the actual proprietorship continued to be held by others.<sup>82</sup>

For some fifty years, Watkins was acclaimed as one of the foremost photographers of the California landscape. He made substantial amounts of money, only to lose it through his poor business judgment. Once writing in the face of adversity, "If this business don't give us a living, we will go and squat on some government land and raise spuds,"<sup>83</sup> he persevered at his chosen craft. Although a failure in many of his business undertakings, Carleton E. Watkins succeeded in establishing a truly enduring legacy of art.

The Watkins studio blueprint is from Price and Haley, *Buyers' Manual and Business Guide* (1872), p. 153; Bradley & Rulofson's blueprint is from the *Philadelphia Photographer* (1874), p. 206-07. The Indian portraits are courtesy the Siskiyou County Museum.



## After 1875: Watkins' Mature Years

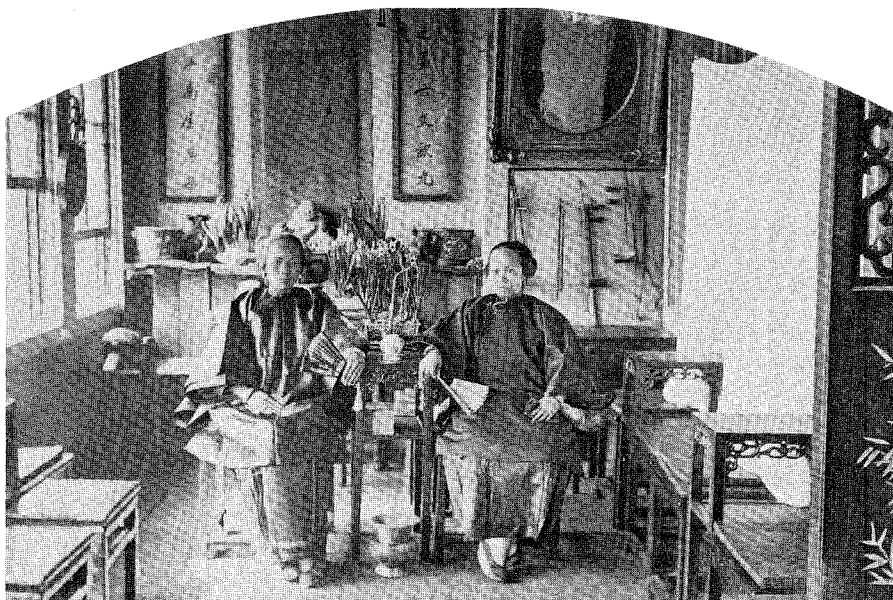
Carleton Watkins' *Pacific Coast Album* of 102 photographs (14 missing), a volume owned by the California Historical Society, offers a good survey of the photographer's work after 1875. It contains numerous Southern California and southwestern views (Watkins rarely photographed south of Carmel prior to 1875) and evidences Watkins' broadened understanding of the character of his adopted state. In addition to photographing tourist sites, industries, cities, and the Northern California wilderness, he expanded his subjects to ethnic groups, including the Chinese and Mexicans; more varied flora, including cacti and the semi-tropical plants of the southern coast; and more varied land forms, including the fertile Central Valley and the desert. Watkins chose to photograph not only the grand natural or manmade monuments, but subjects which he as a photographer had to seek out and discover. The charm of the native Californians captured in *Santa Barbara Beauties*, for example, caught Watkins' eye no less than that of Senator Latham's statue *Aphrodite*, which he photographed in 1872-1875.

Watkins also recognized the historical significance of the Spanish missions, and he made the first known photographic series of them by following the mission trail home from Los Angeles to San Francisco. Years later, when the value of the missions was officially recognized and their restoration begun, Watkins' photographs served as documents of their condition prior to modern changes and repairs.

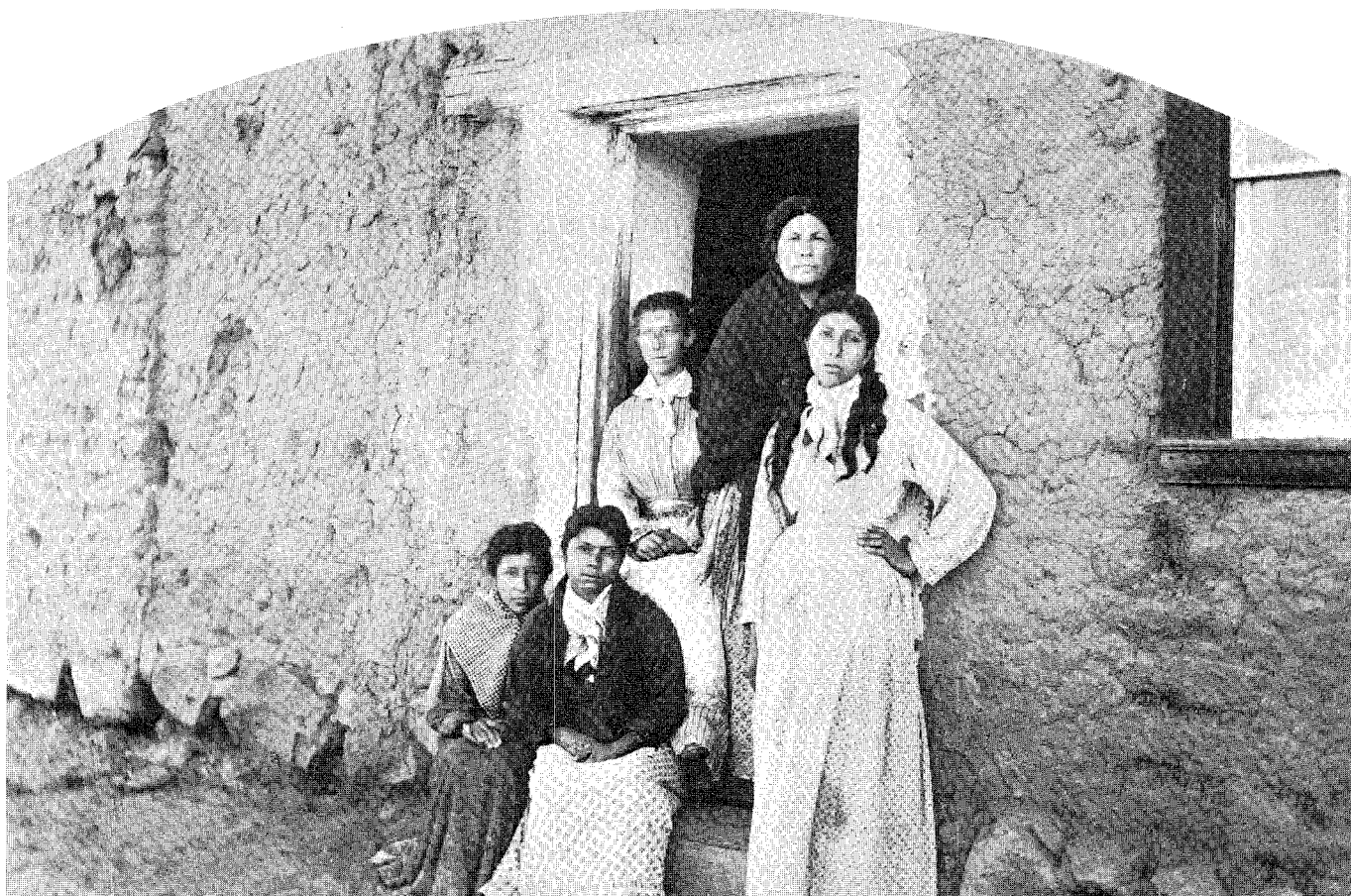
Watkins' later photographs reveal the photographer's increasing preference for

(Continued on page 263)

*Interior of Chinese Restaurant, San Francisco*







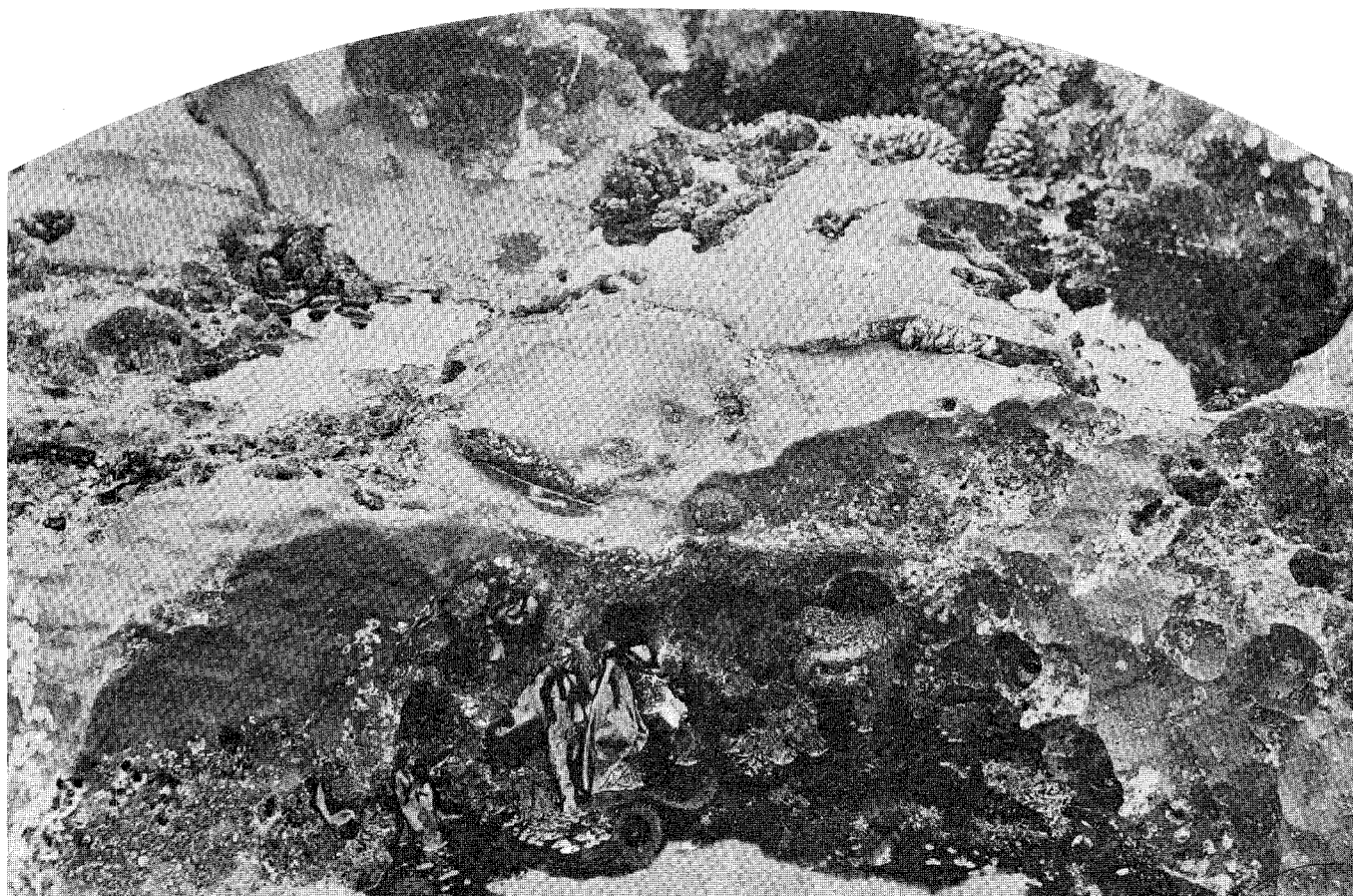
*Santa Barbara Beauties*



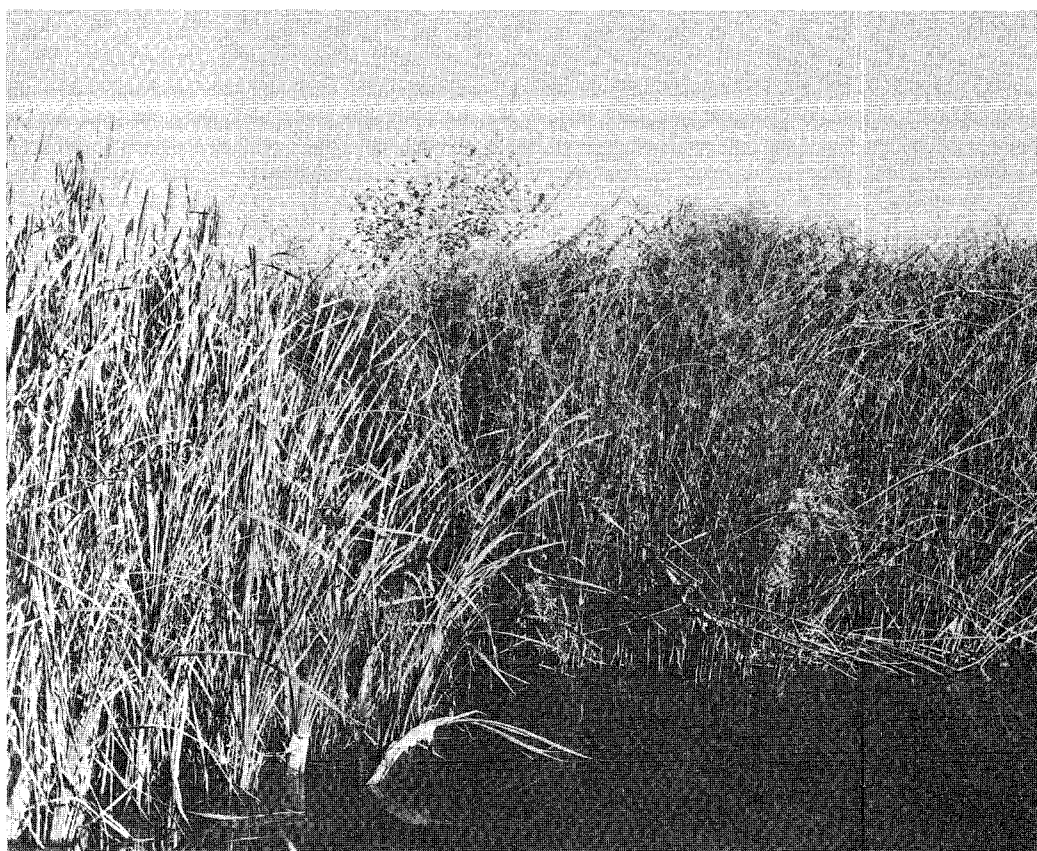
*Mexican Cottage and Group,  
Tejon Ranch*

*Irrigating Alfalfa Fields, Kern County*



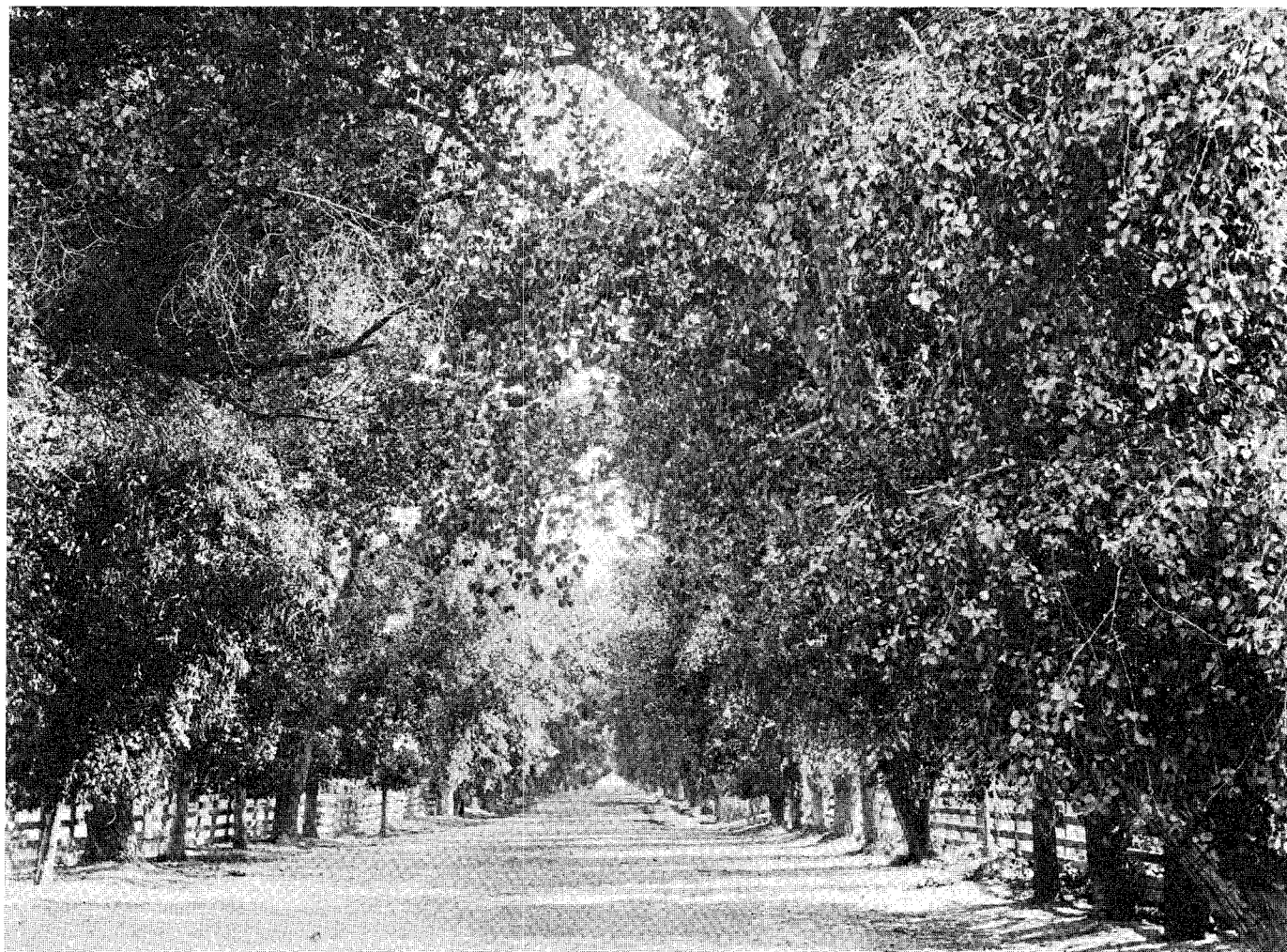


*Sea Aquarium near Santa Cruz*

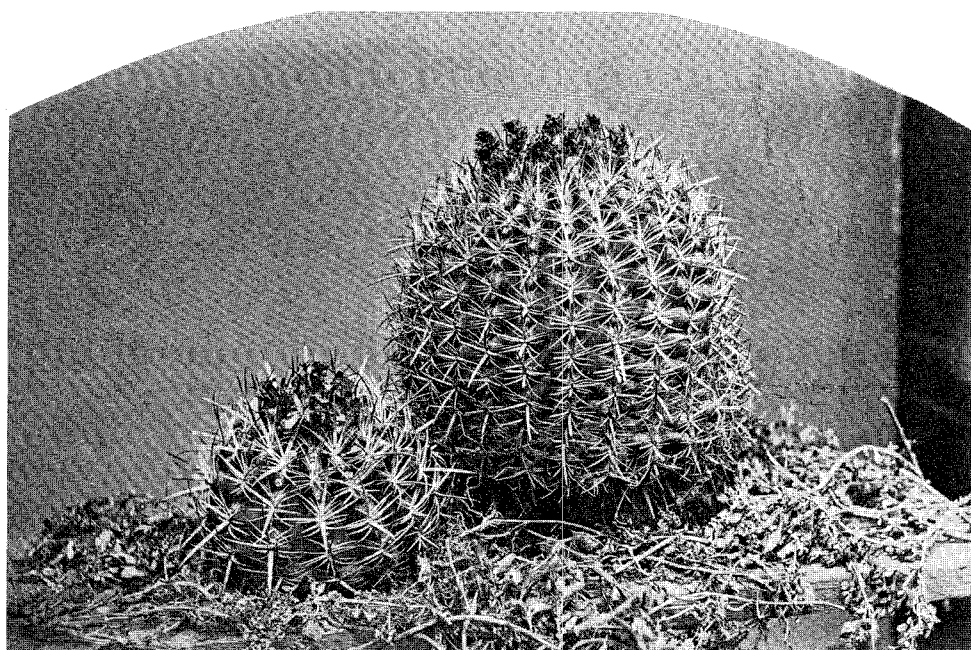


*Cat-tail and Tules*





*Jewett's Lane, Bakersfield*



*Cactus (Echinocactus vividescens)*  
*Southern California*





*Mission San Juan Capistrano, Established  
November 1, 1776*



*Mission Santa Barbara, Established  
December 4, 1786*



emphasizing the abstract elements of his images, the arrangement of light and dark shapes, and the juxtaposition of textures. In narrowed subjects such as *Cat-tail and Tules* and *Sea Aquarium near Santa Cruz*, the abstract pattern no longer serves to establish the tone for the photograph, but becomes the reason for the picture itself.

Although there were probably many reasons for Watkins' change of images—a need for new subjects in a market

glutted with the old, a continuation of his photographic exploration of the West, and commissions which required him to travel—Watkins' Southern California photographs mark a change in, or at least a maturation of, his photographic consciousness. Further study of this album and other collections dating after 1875 will illuminate the historical, technical, and artistic accomplishments of the famous photographer in his mature years.

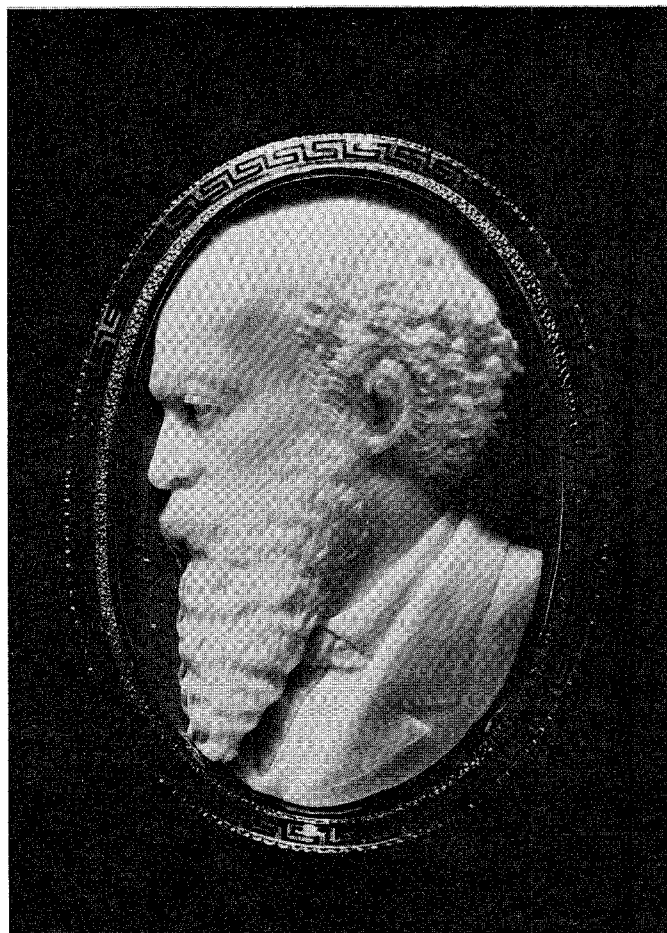
Photographs are from *Pacific Coast Views*, a bound album in the CHS Library. Most of the 4½" x 7½" photographs, of which Watkins made stereographic copies, are from his "Boudoir Series."



# A Watkins Chronology

- 1829 Born November 11 in Oneonta, New York
- 1851/52 Arrived in San Francisco
- 1854 Worked as clerk at G. W. Murray & Co.
- c. 1854 Employed by daguerreotypist Robert Vance, who taught him photography
- 1855-61 Photographed New Idrea and New Almaden mines and Mission Santa Clara (according to Turrill)
- 1859 Photographed Mariposa-Bear Valley area for James Hutchings
- 1861 First listed in San Francisco Directory as daguerrean operator at 425 Montgomery. Acquired mammoth-view camera and made first series of Yosemite views
- 1863 Received critical acclaim—favorable review by Oliver Wendell Holmes and a show at Goupil's Gallery in New York
- 1864 Photographed Yosemite for U.S. survey team led by J. D. Whitney
- 1865 Photographed Schuyler Colfax party in Yosemite
- 1866 Photographed Yosemite again for Whitney and California Geological Survey
- 1867 Opened the Yosemite Art Gallery at 425 Montgomery (listed as 429 Montgomery by 1871). First copyrighted photographs. Photographed Oregon and Columbia River area
- 1868 Won medal for landscape views at Paris Exposition. Friend William Keith engraved a logotype of medal for the verso of Watkins' stereo mounts
- 1870 Photographed Mount Shasta-Mount Lassen area with Clarence King and U.S. Geological Survey

*Cameo of Carleton Watkins*



- 1871 Photographed North Bloomfield Gravel Mines in Nevada County for potential buyers
- 1872 Moved the Yosemite Art Gallery to new, luxurious quarters at 22-26 Montgomery
- 1874-75 Lost gallery and most of its contents to I. W. Taber
- 1876 Photographed Comstock Lode and Virginia City



- 1876-79     Watkins associated with gallery, but Taber listed as owner
- 1880        Watkins moved to 427 Montgomery; Taber to 8 Montgomery. Southern California trip: photographed along Southern Pacific Lines, Arizona, Missions. Photographed Anaconda Copper Mines. Married Frances Sneed
- 1880s        Photographed Golden Gate and Feather River land claims
- 1881-87     Yosemite Art Gallery established at 427 Montgomery with Watkins as manager and W. H. Lawrence (Superintendent, Spring Valley Water Works) as proprietor. Lawrence not listed after 1887
- 1889        Opened sales room at 26 New Montgomery in the Palace Hotel
- c. 1890       Photographed Northwest as far as British Columbia. Photographed Bakersfield area for Kern County Land Company (about 700 views). Photographed Anaconda Copper Mines and Butte, Montana
- 1890s        Commissioned to photograph Phoebe Hearst's Hacienda del Pozo de Verona near Livermore, but unable to complete commission because of blindness
- 1892        Yosemite Art Gallery no longer listed in city directory
- 1879-1906   Watkins and family listed at 1249 Market
- 1906        Earthquake and fire destroyed the contents of Watkins' studio. Family moved to Capay Ranch
- 1910        Committed to Napa State Hospital for the Insane, January 2
- 1916        Watkins died June 23


*An anonymous photographer caught this last picture of Watkins, sick and almost blind, being taken from his studio-home by his son Collis (on left) and a friend after the San Francisco earthquake.*



The photo of the elderly Watkins is from the Society of California Pioneers. The photos on pages 264 and 269 are from the National Park Service, Yosemite Collection.



# Watkins' Photographs in the California Historical Society Library



The Library of the California Historical Society possesses an excellent collection of Carleton E. Watkins' photographs. These include approximately 389 stereographs of San Francisco, Northern California, and western states; 146 cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, and miscellaneous prints of the California missions; 92 mammoth views of Yosemite Valley, the Mariposa Estate, and the San Francisco waterfront; and 2 large leather-bound albums, *Pacific Coast Views* and *Photographic Views of the Falls and Valley in Yo-Semite Valley*. The Library's copy of J. D. Whitney's *Yosemite Book, 1868*, contains 20 original photographs by Watkins.

In Watkins' day, photography was often considered a technical, commercial skill rather than a personalized art form, and it was not uncommon for a photographer to sell negatives of his work to another operator. Many of Watkins' Pacific Railroad stereos were acquired in this manner from A. A. Hart, the official photographer of the Central Pacific Railroad. Many of the Indian photographs were the work of Louis Heller, who chronicled the Modoc War. Thus, a photograph carrying Watkins' logo is not necessarily his original work. One of the Watkins albums held by CHS, *Pacific Coast Views*, also includes material by other photographers such as William Henry Jackson.

A brief summary of the Library's holdings follows, with unusual images noted.

## I. WATKINS STEREOGRAPHS, BY SERIES

### C. E. Watkins, *Pacific Coast* (54)

San Francisco, Yosemite, Northern California scenery.

NOTEWORTHY: New Almaden Mine (old furnace bed, weighing quicksilver); shipwrecks (two of the *Viscata*, one unidentified); crowd of people watching the building of the *Comanche* in San Francisco; Eureka Warehouse at North Point.

Laverne Dicker is Curator of Photographs at the California Historical Society. Her article on California photographer Laura Adams Armer appeared in the Summer, 1977, issue of this magazine.



*Watkins' Pacific Coast* (163)

California and other coastal states.

NOTEWORTHY: Interior and exterior views of the W. C. Ralston residence in Belmont; sea lions, birds, and rock formations on the Farallon Islands; Casa de Pingaree, Malakoff, Nevada County; Captain Jack's cave; The Geysers, Sonoma County; interior of the Lick House dining room; photograph of a painting by W. Bouguereau—barefoot girl with a bowl.

*Watkins' Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific Railroad* (19)

Railroad construction, tracks, trains.

NOTEWORTHY: Tunnel #12, showing placement of steel reinforcements inside the tunnel.

*Pacific Coast Views, C. E. Watkins, San Francisco* (13)

Yosemite and San Francisco.

*Watkins' New Series* (140)

General California and San Francisco scenes, Nevada mining country.

NOTEWORTHY: Exhibit of Watkins' photographs; ferry departing from the Oakland wharf; interior view of Carmel Mission; Santa Monica Hotel; interior, Consolidated Virginia Pan Mill, Nevada; unidentified Indian with painted face; Ophir hoisting works, Nevada; panoramas of "Pasadena"; bee ranch, San Gabriel; California missions.

II. NON-STEREO VIEWS, BY SERIES

*Watkins' New Boudoir Series. Yo Semite and Pacific Coast* (79)

General California scenes.

NOTEWORTHY: Hotel Del Monte and grounds, Monterey; railroad scenes, Camp Capitola; *Queen of the Pacific* leaving San Francisco for San Diego; shell merchant at Pescadero; Chinese fishing village, Monterey; beaching a whale.

*Watkins' New Cabinet Series. Yo Semite and Pacific Coast* (6)

California missions and residences.

*Watkins' New Series. Yo Semite and Pacific Coast* (2)

South San Francisco, Fort Point.

*C. E. Watkins' Art Gallery* (4)

Miscellaneous portraits.

*Watkins' Yosemite Art Gallery* (13)

Portraits, Yosemite Valley views.

NOTEWORTHY: full-length portrait of Korean nobleman, c. 1870.

*Miscellaneous* (42)

Assorted views.

NOTEWORTHY: reproductions of paintings; large mission views mounted on cardboard.

III. OTHER WATKINS HOLDINGS

*Oversize prints* (95)

Yosemite, the Mariposa Estate in 1864, San Francisco and waterfront.

*Albums* (2)

*Photographic Views of the Falls and Valley in Yo-Semite Valley—1863* (51 photographs)

*Pacific Coast Views* (102 pages)

San Francisco and Northern California, Oregon, Arizona, and Colorado. Some prints by William Henry Jackson and others.

*Book* (1)

*Yosemite Book, 1868*, by J. D. Whitney, containing original Watkins photographs.



# Notes

1. Charles B. Turrill, "An Early California Photographer: C. E. Watkins," *News Notes of California Libraries*, 13 (January, 1918): 29-37. This article is soon to be republished by the Photographic Archives of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
2. J. W. Johnson, *The Early Pacific Coast Photographs of Carleton E. Watkins*—Archives Series Report No. 8 (Berkeley: Water Resources Center, University of California), 1960; 1976 reprint edition by Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.
3. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "Doings of the Sunbeam," *Atlantic Monthly*, 12 (July, 1863): 7-8.
4. This information is from a series of interviews in 1949 with Watkins' daughter Julia by Ralph Anderson. Notes from these talks and a taped interview are on file at Yosemite National Park.
5. Turrill, "Watkins," 36.
6. David S. Lavender, *The Great Persuader* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970); Cerinda W. Evans, *Collis Potter Huntington*, 2 vols. (Newport News, Virginia: The Mariner's Museum, 1954). Neither author mentions Watkins.
7. C. W. Haskins, *The Argonauts of California* (New York: published for the author by Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1890), p. 494; Louis J. Rasmussen, *San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists*, II, IV, (Colma, S.F. Historical Records, 1966). The ship *Northerner* arriving from Panama lists C. P. Huntington and Lady as passengers.
8. Turrill, "Watkins," 36.
9. Julia Watkins, taped interview with Pauline Grenbeaux, winter, 1976.
10. Turrill, "Watkins," 36.
11. *Ibid.*, 29, 30. Turrill said the construction occurred in 1854, but the city directory for that year gives the 1853 date.
12. Current research about Robert Vance soon to be published by Peter Palmquist investigates the dates and affiliations of the several galleries owned by Vance in the 1850's and 1860's. The investigation casts some doubt that there was a gallery in San Jose under Vance's name for any length of time. The separate accounts of the Vance story by Turrill (p. 30) and Julia Watkins (previously cited interview) agree. Both sources were certain that Watkins went to San Jose to work for Vance.
13. Turrill, "Watkins," 31.
14. *Ibid.*, 30; Robert Taft, *Photography and the American Scene: A Social History, 1829-1889* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1938), pp. 255-6.
15. Weston J. Naef and James N. Wood, *Era of Exploration: The Rise of Landscape Photography in the American West, 1860-1865* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1975), pp. 80-82. Also see note 56 in Nanette Sexton's essay in this issue.
16. [Robert Vance], preface to *Catalogue of Daguerreotype Panoramic Views in California by Robert Vance*, 1851.
17. Turrill, "Watkins," 30-31. Turrill may be referring to the New Almaden views only when he says they were paper-printed.
- The Watkins photocopy of New Idrea at the Bancroft Library appears to be from a heavily painted daguerreotype.
18. *Ibid.*, 30.
19. *San Jose Evening Tribune*, March 5, 1856. This ad ran through the summer.
20. *San Jose Evening Tribune*, December 10, 1856, no. 23. This ad ran through March, 1857.
21. *San Jose Evening Tribune*, November 23, 1860, no. 21. This ad ran for several years.
22. Turrill, "Watkins," 31.
23. *Ibid.*, 32.
24. Mary V. Hood, "Charles L. Weed: Yosemite's First Photographer," *Yosemite Nature Notes* 38, no. 6 (June, 1959): 82-3.
25. Holmes, "Doings of the Sunbeam," 7.
26. Fitz Hugh Ludlow, "Seven Weeks in the Great Yosemite," *Atlantic Monthly*, 13 (June, 1864): 739-754.
27. Mrs. Byron Dexter letter, printed by Paul Vanderbilt, *Guides to the Special Collections of Prints and Photographs in the Library of Congress* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1955), p. 96.
28. Naef and Wood, *Era of Exploration*, 39.
29. *Ibid.*, 38-39.
30. Turrill, "Watkins," 29-37.
31. The photographs are approximately 13 1/2" x 16" with round tops on plain mounts. The California Historical Society collection of forty-six prints was acquired from Olmstead Brothers of Brookline, Massachusetts. The acquisition date is not recorded, but the date of the photographs is registered as 1864. The Bancroft Library collection of thirty-two prints was a gift of Cornelia H. James. Neither collection is signed by the photographer, but both came to their institutions with attribution to Watkins; the handwritten titles on the backs are similar to those of Watkins' later prints; and several of the titles appear in Watkins' pocket diary of 1864 (which is also at the Bancroft Library). More importantly, both collections contain a view of J. C. Frémont's residence in Bear Valley which also appears in a Watkins album dated 1886 at the California State Library along with five other Mariposa views clearly from the same series.
32. A. Schwartz, "Pen and Pencil Sketches of Bear Valley: Its Surrounding Scenery and Mineral Resources," *Hutchings California Magazine*, 4 (July, 1859): 100-108.
33. R. R. Olmsted, ed., *Scenes of Wonder and Curiosity from Hutchings California Magazine: 1856-1861* (San Francisco: Howell-North, 1961), p. vi.
34. *Mariposa Gazette*, September 13, 1859, n. p.
35. Schwartz, "Pen and Pencil Sketches," 105.
36. *Ibid.*, 107.
37. The stereographs have white paper mats and tan paper binding tapes. Each view is signed and carries a handwritten number and title. The numbers range 1 through 100; one is unnumbered.





*Watkins' children, Collis and Julia, peered through a doorway in the Austin Building. Watkins' family usually lived adjacent to his studio.*

The collection appears to be intact as the box has exactly seventy-two slots.

38. The California Historical Society owns nine of Watkins' glass stereographs, six of which show Yosemite scenes and five of which are duplicated in the Baird Collection. Baird (1823-1887) was assistant secretary of the Smithsonian from 1850 to 1878 and made secretary in 1878. The seller's catalogue for the Yosemite collection says: "Baird published over 1200 papers and was instrumental in building the natural history collections at the Smithsonian. His influence made the U. S. government western explorations important sources of new scientific information. Quite likely, his interest in these early western discoveries led to his acquisition of the Watkins photographs as soon as they were published." See *Yosemite Photographs of Carleton E. Watkins*, sales catalogue for Russell Norton (New Haven, Conn., 1976), p. 11.
39. Turrill, "Watkins," 32.
40. Willingham F. Rawnsley, ed., *The life, diaries and correspondence of Lady Jane Franklin, 1792-1875* (London: MacDonald, 1923), 232 pp., noted in sales catalogues as above; Catherine Coffin Phillips, [The] *Coulterville Chronicle* (San Francisco: Grabhorn Press, 1942), p. 180.
41. Naef and Wood, *Era of Exploration*, 82.
42. Ibid.
43. Holmes, "Doings of the Sunbeam," 7-8.
44. J. D. Whitney, *Geology: Report of Progress and Synopsis of the Field-work from 1860-1864* (Philadelphia: Claxton Press, 1865), p. 408.
45. It was the practice in the 1850's to credit the gallery rather than the individual operator. Daguerreotypes which bear the stamp

of Vance may actually be Watkins' work. Peter Palmquist's soon-to-be-published research into Vance's career should cast more light on the circumstances surrounding the association of two men.

46. No. 1235, *Mission Santa Clara*, and no. 1236, *Mission San Francisco de Asis*, Watkins' New Series, 26 New Montgomery Street, San Francisco, in the collection of the Huntington Library. The "New Series" was published after 1875.
47. This date is based on the date of the addition of a clock on the bell tower.
48. Salt paper was the earliest form of silver-halide printing paper. Salt prints are characterized by a dull matt finish; in contrast to the glossy finish of albumen paper, the image appeared to be fused into the paper rather than a part of the glossy albumin surface. Salt paper was used extensively by portrait galleries because it was easy to hand color. Why Watkins printed this set of views on salt paper is unclear, for he never used it again. It may be that he was working in a portrait gallery—Vance's—and used the conventional gallery equipment for this special commission.
49. Collodion, a viscous transparent substance, was mixed with potassium iodide and then poured over the clean glass plate. Watkins had to take great care to pour the mixture evenly over the entire plate, a procedure that required agility and much practice. The plate was then sensitized with silver nitrate and immediately placed in the camera where it was exposed while it was still wet. (The chemicals deteriorated if the collodion was allowed to dry.) The plate was then returned to the dark tent and the latent image developed with pyrogalllic acid or ferrous sulphate and then fixed with sodium thiosulphate. The entire



process, depending on the exposure, took between forty-five minutes to an hour.

50. Although the Schwartz article in which some of Watkins' Mariposa views were reproduced contains illustrations of the interiors of several mines, the lack of sufficient light made it impossible for Watkins to photograph the operations within the mines.
51. *The Philadelphia Photographer*, January 1866, p. 21.
52. A comparison of Watkins' photograph of the Frémont residence and the engraved version shows that the engraver eliminated the long stretch of foreground which Watkins had to include due to the narrow range of the Chevalier lens. Watkins was forced to stand quite a distance away to encompass all the structures that made up the Frémont residence. See also essay on Mariposa views in this issue.
53. Watkins must have used the standard Chevalier lens (a double-objective achromat which could be converted from portrait to landscape work by reversing one objective) for his Mariposa views. This lens covered a small angle of view, approximately 25°. Roger Kingslake, "Early Landscape Lenses," *Image*, March, 1955, p. 21.
54. The emulsion was particularly sensitive to blue light. A sufficient exposure for the green of the landscape overexposed the sky area, rendering it a textureless blank area when printed.
55. Turrill, "Watkins," 32.
56. This device was not necessarily used for picturesque effect, as has been suggested by some Watkins enthusiasts. William Culp Darrah, a leading expert on stereo views, believes that Watkins was not influenced by the picturesque European landscape style as early as 1861 because the views were not available in California.
57. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1859, p. 744.
58. Holmes, "Doings of the Sunbeam," 8.
59. Number 26, not illustrated, is the final close-up view of the falls. This view excludes entirely the outline of the rock formation.
60. To date this writer has found this view in only three collections.
61. Coleman Sellers, a leading photographic authority of the period, described the difference made by the new Globe lens: "I remember once standing on a bridge—camera in hand and looking up the romantic Wissahicon. The picture presented to my eye was very beautiful—the centre a waterfall framed in on both sides by the arch of a railroad bridge crossing at the tops of the cliffs. The foreground was made up of a stone bed, where danced and foamed the rapid current. I planted the camera and hoped soon to peel off from this charming view a cuticle (as Dr. Holmes says) which like plates of mica could be split and re-split for the collections of my friends. But on the ground glass I found naught but the tumbling water. No rocks, no bridge, no stony river bed—the poor camera with its empty head was incapable of taking in the whole charming picture. One of the dreams of the photographer has been of an instrument which should embrace a large angle and thus satisfy the wants of the eye. . . ." "On the Globe Lens," *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, March, 1863, p. 321.
62. Whitney says on page 12 of his report that Watkins used the Dallmeyer lens belonging to the survey. However, this was in reference to the smaller format photographs made for the report. Dallmeyer did not at that time make a lens for mammoth photographs.
63. Turrill, "Watkins," 37.
64. Reese V. Jenkins, *Images & Enterprise: Technology and the American Photographic Industry, 1839 to 1925* (Baltimore & London: John Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 50.
65. William Culp Darrah, *Stereo Views: A History of Stereographs in America and their Collection* (Gettysburg: Times & News Publishing Co., 1964), p. 75.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*, 55.
68. *Ibid.*, 35. Hart successfully marketed his own stereographs for many years. Besides his own issue, a number of Hart's early Central Pacific Railroad stereographs were also published by Whitney & Paradise of 585 Broadway, New York. These latter have a revenue tax stamp affixed to their verso confirming their production prior to August 1, 1866.
69. *Ibid.*
70. *Ibid.*
71. Paul Hickman, "Carleton E. Watkins, 1829-1916," *Northlight*, no. 1 (Tempe: Arizona State University, January, 1977), p. 17.
72. *Buyers Manual & Business Guide* (San Francisco: J. Price & C. S. Haley, 1872), p. 53-54.
73. Turrill, "Watkins," 29. It should be noted that despite the assertion that Taber obtained *all* of Watkins' assets, little evidence exists which shows the use of Watkins' smaller negatives. The stereographs originally produced by Hart and Heller do not appear under the Taber imprint. Moreover, Watkins continues to issue these and many of his other stereographs as part of his "New Series" long after the Taber takeover.
74. Johnson, "The Early Pacific Coast Photographs," 62.
75. Correspondence to his wife, Watkins' file, Yosemite National Park.
76. Naef and Wood, *Era of Exploration*, 86.
77. Turrill, "Watkins," 34-35.
78. *Ibid.*, 33.
79. *San Francisco City Directory*, 1873.
80. J. J. Reilly, "Outdoor Work on the Pacific Coast," *Philadelphia Photographer*, 1874, p. 211.
81. Correspondence to his wife, previously cited.
82. Johnson, "The Early Pacific Coast Photographs," 62-63.
83. Correspondence to his wife, previously cited.



## Reviews

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

### Blacks in California: *An Annotated Guide to the Manuscript Sources in the CHS Library*

The staff of the California Historical Society Library is continually developing reference tools to aid researchers using the Society's more than 3000 manuscript collections. As part of that effort, this annotated guide to the manuscript sources related to blacks in California has been prepared to facilitate research on the black historical experience in the state.

Twenty-six items are listed; they are found in six collections created by blacks and ten collections created by whites which contain materials either by or about blacks. The material consists of letters, documents, and transcripts of oral history interviews. More than 100 years are covered by the sources which date from the 1830's to the 1950's.

The manuscript sources listed here provide many clues to the long and varied, if still unexplored, experiences of blacks in California. They represent the diversity of people and activities that make up the human experience. Among the people whose history is documented by these sources are a businessman, writer, playwright, union organizer, club women, and activists who spoke for the equal rights of blacks.

Of particular note are the papers of William A. Leidesdorff, which contain the account books and business correspondence from his commercial ventures and the letters he received as United States vice-consul. Included is a petition for the right of blacks to testify and serve as witnesses in California court cases involving whites. Also of interest are the papers from the trial of Charlotte L. Brown, who helped win for blacks the right to ride San Francisco's street cars. Both were part of the civil rights struggles of the 1850's and 1860's. From almost 100 years later are the letters of W. Robert Wells, an inmate of San Quentin who wrote about the inhuman conditions in prison and the injustice of his death sentence. The large 111-box collection of Mayor James Rolph

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Ms. Lachatanere is Manuscript Processor at the California Historical Society.



*Delilah Beasley, columnist with the Oakland Tribune, authored Negro Trailblazers of California based on her columns for the newspaper.*



contains a letter from playwright Garland Anderson, written prior to his play's opening on Broadway, requesting financial support for the production. Asa Call's 1850-1853 diary reveals what one white man thought about blacks and slavery in California prior to the Civil War.

Preparation of this guide began with an examination of the library's card catalog and James de T. Abajian's *Blacks and their Contributions to the American West: A Bibliography and Union List of Library Holdings through 1870* (G. K. Hall, 1974). In addition, numerous CHS manuscript collections—especially those of political and public figures and organizations—were surveyed because material on blacks is often buried within these

collections. Histories of blacks in California were studied for clues to names and organizations in order to increase the probability of locating pertinent documents. The following resources were also checked: histories of black churches and programs of church meetings and conventions; programs and reports of meetings of black organizations, such as the Afro-American League, Freemasons, and the Booker T. Washington Community Center; Delilah Beasley's *Negro Trailblazers of California* (1919) and James de T. Abajian's *Blacks in Selected Newspapers, Censuses and other Sources: An Index to Names and Subjects* (1974) (both excellent sources for names); proceedings from the California colored conventions; black newspapers; articles in the *California Historical Quarterly*, *Pacific Historical Review*, and *Journal of Negro History*; and many other sources.

Examination of collections not previously identified as containing sources on blacks revealed no new information, with one exception: the Articles of Association of the Sacramento Republican Party. On the other hand, additional sources were found in the 111 boxes of Mayor Rolfe's papers, eight letters and a petition having been identified. No doubt this collection, as well as those of the California and the San Francisco Leagues of Women Voters (twenty-four and nineteen boxes respectively), contain more documents about blacks, but this search has yet to be completed.

The arrangement of the entries below is as follows: listed first is general information, such as name, vital dates, place of birth (if known), place of residence if place of birth is not known, occupation(s), and any significant historical role. The next section identifies the specific characteristics of the collection: type of material, time span, size of the collection. (The existence of the original document is assumed unless otherwise noted.) The third section describes the contents of the collection. Excerpts referring to blacks in diaries and letters, as well as items produced by blacks in collections created by whites, are described following the description of the collections.



More information about the collections is available in the descriptive guides containing subject headings and name entries filed in the CHS Library. In addition to the manuscript sources, the library also houses black newspapers, books and other printed materials, photographs, and ephemera on black people in California.

This history of black people is still being written, and many areas remain to be investigated. It is for the continued clarification and interpretation of that history that this guide has been compiled.

BEASLEY, Delilah Leontium (1871-1934), of Berkeley, California; writer.

Autographed letter signed (ALS), September 15, [192?], to Mrs. Loomis, photocopy.

Letter written by Beasley, a black woman, discussing personal matters and promotional efforts to sell her book, *Negro Trailblazers of California* (1919), the first history of blacks in California.

BLACKS IN CALIFORNIA, 1852-1863.

Petition, c. 1862. 1 folder.

Petition by blacks calling for the repeal of California laws which denied them the right of testimony in court cases related to whites; no signatures.

Organized opposition by blacks to the 1851 law that prohibited them from testifying or serving as witnesses in court actions involving whites included the formation of the Franchise League (1852) and the colored conventions of 1855-1857. The league and conventions produced petitions similar to this one, signed by blacks and whites, which were presented to the legislature. It was not until 1863 that the law was reformed.

BROWN, Charlotte L., of San Francisco; plaintiff.

Documents, 1865. 1 folder.

Legal documents and transcript of testimony from the 1865 court case brought by Brown, a black woman, against the Omnibus Railroad Company, charging an ejection from a street car in 1863. Includes notes of her attorney, W. C. Burnett, list of jurors, and a newspaper article describing a similar suit brought against the North Beach and Mission Railroad Company.

This court suit was one of a series filed by black people (including Mary Ellen Pleasant and William Bowen) against transportation companies in San Francisco. Blacks won the right to ride street cars in San Francisco in 1864.

Brown was the daughter of James Brown, activist and a founder of *The Mirror of the Times*, an early black newspaper.

CALL, Asa Cyrus (1823-?), of Iowa; farmer, cattle rancher, schoolteacher, judge.

Bound, typed copy of travel and daily diary, 1850-1853, 48 pages.

Overland journey from Indiana to Sonora, California; records agricultural development, weather, insects, animals, and plants of the Sonora region; Indians; Oberlin College; philosophical essays on slavery, death, the family, and nature.

Mentions run-away slaves going to California and California's constitutional prohibitions against slave owners bringing slaves into the state.

COLEMAN, William Tell (1830-1893) b. Kentucky; merchant, organizer and leader of the San Francisco Vigilance committees of 1851 and 1856.

Typed copy of 1878 reminiscence. 1 folder.

Reminiscences of voyage aboard the steamer *Tennessee* from New York to San Francisco via Panama, 1853, dealing with Coleman's takeover of the physician's duties after a major outbreak of yellow fever aboard ship.

Coleman recounts how his unnamed servant, "a free colored man . . . who was coming to California to better his condition" assisted him during the crisis.

COSAD, David, of New York; miner, carpenter.

Travel diary, March, 1849-February, 1850, 73 pages.

Overland journey from New York to Placerville; hardships of journey, supplies, gold mining, Indians, Blacks.

Cosad relates how a runaway slave, Jack Marney, joined his company of gold miners (October 6, 1849).

DANIELS, Helena A. Knitscheer (1865-?) of Holland; housewife, columnist.

Papers, 1893-1895. 5 folders.

Letters written for an Amsterdam newspaper column, "From California," by a Dutch woman who emigrated to San Francisco in 1893. Letters give a detailed record of San Francisco in the 1890's and include comments on the laboring classes, Chinese, women.



Comments on the size of the black population in California and the jobs held by blacks (March 16, 1893).

DELOSADA, Betty Baget (1921- ) b. San Francisco; union organizer.

Papers, 1939-1964. 1 box, 1 volume.

DeLosada's papers include an essay on the labor movement; International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union printed material; newspaper clippings; and correspondence from her husband Horace's files as business agent for ILWU, Local 6.

Wells, Wesley Robert (1909-?) b. Fort Worth, Texas; 8 TLS, October, 1953-April, 1955.

Letters to Horace DeLosada while Wells was on Death Row at San Quentin for assault of a prison guard. Includes a letter from Mayor George Christopher to DeLosada regarding the Wells case; pamphlet written by Wells and published by the San Francisco Civil Rights Congress giving biographical data on Wells and details of the successful campaign to remove him from Death Row.

KING, Thomas Starr (1824-1864) b. New York City; minister, lecturer.

6 ALS, 1860-1864. 1 folder.

Letters to N. A. Haven Ball, friend, businessman, and financier of King's lecture tours, concerning King's preaching and lecturing throughout the state, personal business investments, and family matters.

King, minister of the First Unitarian Church, San Francisco, and a prominent anti-slavery leader, established close ties with the black community in California. The two letters which refer to blacks (October 28 and 30, 1861) deal with his lecturing activities for black audiences.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA, 1911-.

Records, 1911-1955. 24 boxes and 1 package.

Includes minutes, correspondence, and printed material from the office files.

Black women organized chapters of the League of Women Voters in San Francisco, Alameda County, San Jose, Fresno, Modesto, Bakersfield, and Los Angeles. Among the women active in these chapters whose activities are mentioned in the archives of the California League are Hettie B. Tilghman, Delilah L. Beasley, Vivian L. Simmons, Mamie Smith,

Margaret J. Mabson, Mrs. Gregory Hobson, and Mrs. Bass, 1923-1932.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1911-.

Records, 1911-1963. 19 boxes and 18 volumes.

Includes minutes of the board of directors, correspondence of presidents and secretaries, annual reports, scrapbooks, and other records.

Includes some information on the San Francisco Center, Colored League of Women Voters, and the activities of Margaret J. Mabson, director, 1923; and the work of Mabson, Mrs. Gregory Hobson and Mrs. Jeffrey T. Wilson with the San Francisco League's Get Out the Vote Committee, 1924.

LEIDESDORFF, William Alexander (1810-1848) b. St. Croix, Virgin Islands; merchant, U.S. vice-consul.

Papers, 1834-1857. 13 folders.

Leidesdorff, a black man, established himself in San Francisco in 1841 as a trader and merchant. He was appointed U.S. vice-consul by Thomas O. Larkin and served as a member of the town council and school board and treasurer of the city of San Francisco. His papers include correspondence, account books, orders, and receipts from his business concerns; photocopies of letters from Thomas O. Larkin and John B. Montgomery dealing with his appointment as vice-consul, and the raising of the American flag in California by Montgomery; other correspondence relating to his official position; and documents concerning his land grant, "Rio de los Americanos."

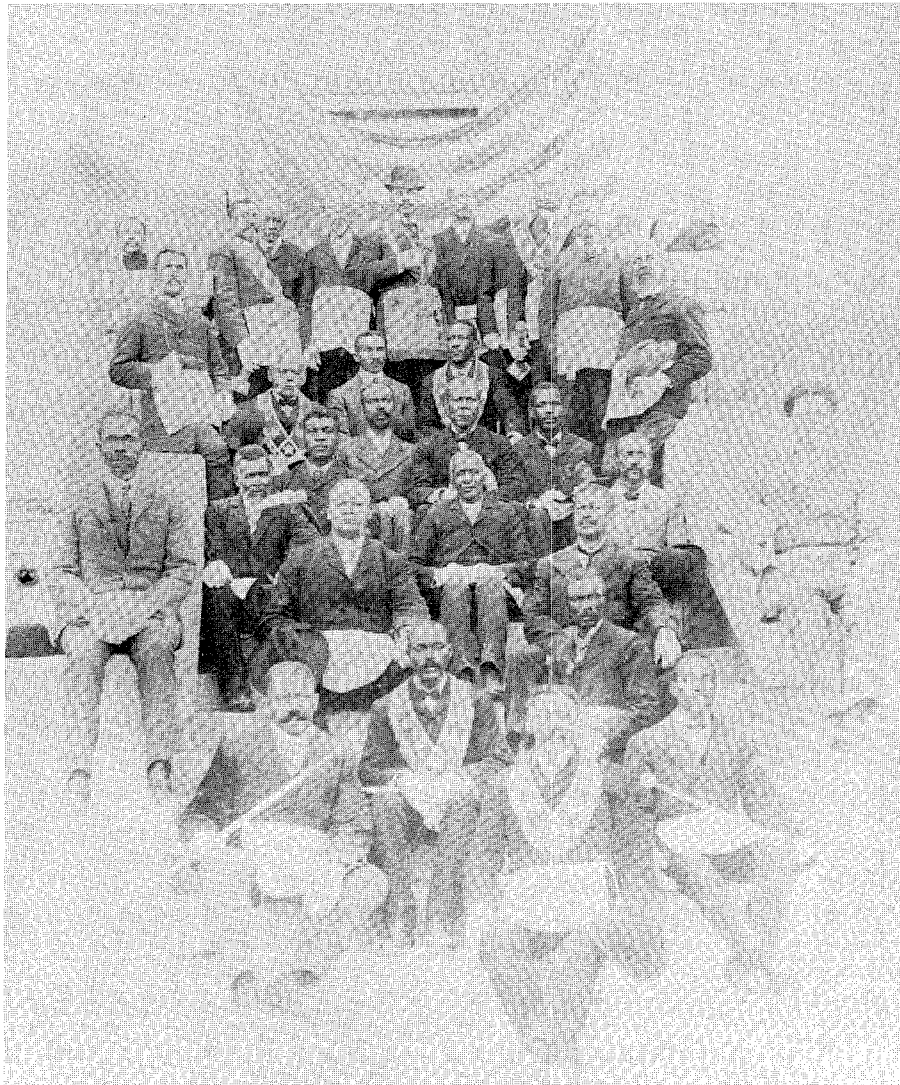
This collection also contains the papers of Joseph Libby Folsom and Henry W. Halleck, and city and state documents. The Folsom papers include documents pertaining to the Leidesdorff estate and his efforts to secure title. The Halleck papers are from the law firm of Halleck, Peachy and Billings, and consist of many land grant claims and other legal documents, including some dealing with Leidesdorff's grant. Many of the documents are in Halleck's autograph.

ORR, Violet (1904- ) b. San Francisco; laundry worker, union organizer.

Oral History Interview, 1976, by Lucy Kendall, typed transcript, 58 pages.

Typed transcript of tape-recorded interviews conducted May-December, 1976, for the Women in California Collection of the CHS Library. Interviews focused on women in





*Members of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge (Freemasons) in Marysville, 1906. Black fraternal organizations have their roots in colonial times and formed an important part of the black community's experience in California.*

the trade union and left-wing political movements during the 1930's and 1940's.

Comments cover childhood, education, family, employment as a laundry worker, union activities, membership and activities in the Communist Party, experiences in Russia after the 1917 Revolution, and peace work.

Includes discussion of work with Jane Gray, a black woman, and their efforts to secure adequate housing for blacks during World War II.

PLEASANT, Mary Ellen (1812-1904) of San Francisco; abolitionist, businesswoman.

Papers, 1884, 1886. 1 foledr.

Includes photocopy of a note from Newton Booth; and a signed check for the Spring Valley Water Works.

An important figure in black California history, Mary Ellen Pleasant traveled to San Francisco in the 1850's and became employed as a housekeeper. An astute businesswoman, she

later established a laundry and several boardinghouses. Booth was one of the many prominent California citizens who boarded at her establishment at 920 Washington Street.

POWELL, Helene (1919- ) b. San Jose; union organizer, teacher.

Oral History Interview, 1976-1977, by Lucy Kendall, typed transcript, 163 pages. Indexed.

Transcript of 9½ hours of tape recorded interviews conducted October 1976-January 1977, for the Women in California Collection of the CBS Library.

Powell, a black woman, was a union organizer in the 1940s. The interview covers childhood in San Jose; family life; college years, including her presidency of the Negro Students' Union at the University of California, Berkeley; her first job experience at a warehouse; involvement with the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, Local 6, as an organizer, steward, and executive board member.



*William A. Leidesdorff, San Francisco's  
most prominent early black citizen.  
The Leidesdorff manuscript collection records  
his diverse activities as businessman,  
landowner, and U.S. vice-consul.*



RANDOLPH, Thomas E. (1820-1901) of Virginia; minister, businessman.

Papers, 1901. 1 folder, photocopy.

Handwritten copy of the obituary for Randolph, from the (*San Francisco Pacific Coast?*) *Appeal*, April 25, 1901.

Randolph, a black resident of Marysville from 1856, was minister of the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

REPUBLICAN PARTY, 1856.

Document, 1856. 1 folder, photolithograph.

Handwritten pamphlet by George H. Baker of the Sacramento Republican Party articles of association.

Article 3 refers to the "uncompromising opposition to the extension of slavery."

ROLPH, James (1869-1934), b. San Francisco; mayor of San Francisco, governor of California.

Papers, 1911-1930. 111 boxes and 35 volumes.

Correspondence and papers mainly from his terms as mayor of San Francisco. Collection contains several letters and documents sent by black people to Rolph as mayor.

Colored Men's Non-Partisan League, ALS, September 19, 1911.

Letter written by league secretary William H. Dowell requesting that Rolph meet with the organization; reference made to Dowell's belief that Rolph would assist San Francisco's black population. Rolph's response of September 22, 1911, included. (Letterhead lists officers.)

E. J. Jackson, 2 ALS, January 27, 1912, February 28, 1912.

January 27. Letter from Jackson refers to his application for a position with the supply department of the San Francisco public schools. Mentions his employment in the office of the Secretary of State for twelve years and his activity in Rolph's campaign for mayor; the Colored Workmen's Club; nephew Charles Jamison, President; E. Dennis, Dr. C. A. Griffin, Rev. C. W. H. Nelson. Rolph's response of January 29, 1912, included.

February 28. Letter of recommendation for Jackson from C. F. Curry, Sacramento. "Mr. Jackson took an earnest and active part in your campaign and delivered a number of speeches in your behalf. He is one of the most prominent colored men in California and does not pose as a colored politician."

John H. Taylor, ALS, March 5, 1912.

Letter of recommendation from H. U. Brandenstein,

lawyer, for Taylor who applied for a position as a driver or janitor with the city.

Virginia Stephens, ALS, January 28, 1915.

Letter from the winner of the *San Francisco Call*'s contest for the "pet name" of the Panama Pacific International Exposition (Jewel City). Rolph's response of January 30, 1915, included.

Colored Non-Partisan Leagues of California, 2 typed letters signed (TLS), February 6, 1915, March 27, 1915.

Letters written by S. L. Mash, attorney, businessman and president of the leagues. Mash begins both letters with statements about race relations in San Francisco and then presents grievances with overtones of racial harassment. (Letterhead lists names of officers.) Rolph's response of February 9, 1915; response from Chief of Police D. H. White, including officer's report, February 23, 1915.

4 Protest Petitions, March, 1915.

Petitions against the showing of the *Birth of a Nation* (aka *Clansman*) in San Francisco movie theatres. Three petitions with signatures submitted by the "Colored Citizens of San Francisco"; one typed copy of petition submitted by the Negro Welfare League. Names of the committee members of the league given; no signatures.

Garland Anderson, ALS, April 12, 1925.

Letter written from New York City while attempting to raise funds for the production of his play, *Appearances*, the first play written by a black person to open on Broadway (1925). Anderson requests financial support for the play from Rolph. Rolph's response of April 16, 1925, included.

All the photographs are from the CHS Library.



## Book Reviews

### *Drawn from Life: California Indians in Pen and Brush.*

By Theodora Kroeber, Albert B. Elsasser, and Robert Heizer. (Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1977. 295 pp. Paper \$8.95.)

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*Reviewed by Lowell J. Bean, Professor of Anthropology, California State University.*

The publication of *Drawn From Life* provides for the first time the reproduction of many of the remarkable first-hand visual accounts of native Californians from the earliest times that they were observed by Europeans until, and slightly after, the invention of photography. The authors and collectors of these valuable documents are to be congratulated for their painstaking efforts.

The knowledge necessary to draw such a collection comes from Albert Elsasser and Robert Heizer's many years of working with California Indian materials. The accompanying essays draw very much upon the poignant and poetic style of Theodora Kroeber.

The book is arranged regionally, so that a brief sketch of each area precedes the reproduction of many pictures of the area. It is in these essays that the special talents of Theodora Kroeber are readily seen. Readers of her *Almost Ancestors*, jointly authored with Heizer, will recall the style and data of that excellent book. Included in *Drawn From Life* are brief essays about the history and discovery of these pictures, how, when, and under what circumstances they were done, and essays on each of the following regions: the Rio Colorado nations, Tribes of the Southern Missions, Tribes of the Northern Missions, Southern Valley Peoples, Sierra Nevada People, Sierran Mountain Folk, North Coast Range People, Peoples of the Northeast, and Tribes of the Northwest. Notes accompanying many of the pictures comment upon their ethnographic significance or history.

Some aspects of this publication are bothersome. The comments on pictures are a bit thin, the essays on cultural regions a bit oversimplified and romanticized, and the quality of the production of the pictures disappointing. For those that have seen the illustrations in their original contexts, they are sorry representations of the artists' fine work, and they also fail to do justice to native Californians.

This sort of book surely deserved a greater investment by the publisher. Not only are black-and-white pieces poorly represented—fuzzy to the point of a significant loss of detail

—but the marvelous color representations of these artists are completely lost. Even the reproduction of a few of the latter would encourage the reader to search further to explore the artistic significance of the pieces.

Despite these complaints, I recommend the book to anyone interested in native Californians. It provides valuable visual information about many aspects of culture, history, clothing, costume, housing, architecture, settlement patterns, religion, ritual, subsistence, posture, hunting, fishing and gathering techniques, division of labor, and many more odds and ends of ethnographic data, including relationships with non-Indians, Europeans, Chinese, other tribes, and perhaps reactions and adaptations to new and changing conditions.

### *Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam.*

By Charles F. Outland. (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1977. 275 pp. \$15.75.)

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*Reviewed by William Kahl, currently a Rockefeller Fellow, preparing an atlas of California's water resources and a new history of the controversy over Los Angeles' water supply in the Owens Valley.*

More books have probably been written about California than any other state in the Union with the exception of Virginia and Massachusetts. And yet, of all the gaps in this considerable bibliography, none is more startling than the paucity of material dealing with the history of water development, which has played the principal role in shaping the patterns of settlement in California and the nature of our lives on the land. For several years, the Arthur H. Clark Company has been working to correct this situation through its Western Lands and Waters Series, succeeding most notably with Robert Kelley's *Gold vs. Grain* and Charles F.

Outland's *Man-Made Disaster*. Now, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the collapse of the Saint Francis, Clark has produced a new and substantially revised edition of Outland's masterful history of the night in 1928 when the Santa Clara Valley was covered by a 100-foot wall of moving water.

While San Francisco has turned its earthquake into an apparently unceasing mill of civic pride and commercial profit, the Saint Francis has been pressed into an enforced obscurity. This is remarkable because, while the two were



comparable in terms of their death tolls, the Saint Francis disaster is the more singular event in that it was entirely the result of an act of man. Outland has had to approach his topic almost as an investigative reporter, scaling the barricade thrown up in front of basic records by officials of the two utility companies responsible, and the quality of discovery and indignation at what he has found on the other side lends great force and verve to his narrative.

Owners of the first edition of *Man-Made Disaster*, libraries in particular, will find a new purchase is in order because Outland's new edition has effectively supplanted the first as the definitive work on the subject. The appearance of the first edition in 1963 prompted numerous heretofore unknown eyewitnesses to come forward with a host of new information. As a result, the author reveals in his new work those elements of the story which "he knew to be truth" but which he felt restrained from telling in the first edition by the absence of documented evidence and the threat of libel. With the assistance of this new material (much of which became available through the agency of the *California Historical Quarterly*), Outland is able to demonstrate persuasively that much of the testimony given by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power at the Coroner's Inquest following the disaster was false and directed principally at covering up the failure of the officials involved to spread the alarm early enough to save the lives of the hundreds who perished on that terrible March night. Outland is particularly effective at exploding the claims of the Southern California Edison Company to credit for spreading the alarm by pointing out that the company could scarcely have acted as it claimed when it failed to warn 84 of its own workmen who died downstream more than an hour after the company said it knew the dam had failed.

Although Outland's work is likely to remain the last word on the subject, he makes no claim to presenting the full story, which may never be known. As one of his informants who was on the scene told him: "There are some things we'll never tell." And Outland is not above giving a tug now and then to some of the loose ends of his story. As he recounts the behavior of the responsible officials of Los Angeles on the days preceding the dam's collapse, he seems almost to suggest that they were aware of its weakness but kept silent for some dark purpose of their own. He concludes the book with a list of "Pregnant Questions" which are often tantalizing but in some instances apparently extraneous. Most annoying of all, he continues, as he did in the first edition, to dance

away from the key question of whether the dam was sabotaged. Outland has his own theory for how the dam fell, and he argues it well. But his explanation of the collapse does not preclude the possibility that the structure was dynamited. And, while Outland notes the evidence of sabotage, he does so obliquely, avoiding any conclusions of his own with the extemporaneous excuse that the mood of the public following the disaster precluded any possibility of acceptance of a sabotage theory.

These are small complaints, however, with a book which makes for exciting reading and the best kind of revelatory history.

*The Bonanza Kings: The Social Origins and Business Behavior of Western Mining Entrepreneurs, 1870-1900.*

By Richard H. Peterson. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977. xvi, 191 pp. \$9.95.)

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*Reviewed by Spencer C. Olin, Jr., Professor and Chairperson, Department of History, University of California, Irvine.*

This is a narrowly focused, yet thoroughly competent, study of frontier elites, particularly fifty industrial mining entrepreneurs or "bonanza kings." These bonanza kings, according to Richard Peterson, occupied a middle stage between the self-sufficient, independent, itinerant prospectors who dominated the early period of mining and the "large, decentralized, multidivisional corporation of the twentieth century."

The typical mining entrepreneur of the late-nineteenth century was born in the United States to a lower- or middle-class family of British ancestry. He migrated West during the initial rush to the mining regions in the 1850's and 1860's. There he found a frontier region no more tolerant than eastern society, but certainly more open to social ascent and business success. In an attempt to test that portion of the Turner thesis regarding vertical social mobility, Peterson concludes (p. 4) that "the relatively poor immigrant had a somewhat better chance of becoming a leading industrialist on the mining frontier than in the more established sections of the country."

While noting this alleged difference, Peterson also demon-



strates certain similarities between the ethnic and regional backgrounds of western mining entrepreneurs and national business elites. Furthermore, these bonanza kings were faced with problems very much like those confronted by their industrial counterparts in the East: a limited amount of available capital; a need for technological training and expertise; the acquisition of properties; the hiring and control of a labor force; and the pressures favoring corporate consolidation and vertical integration. The methods by which these problems were dealt with form the core of *The Bonanza Kings*.

Peterson's organizational framework and clarity of presentation are deserving of praise. Without a doubt, his book is a most useful addition to entrepreneurial history. And yet certain characteristics of his analysis cause me to have reservations about some of the conclusions offered.

One of these conclusions is that in their business and social behavior "western mining entrepreneurs apparently had more in common with eastern industrialists than with such frontier types as the prospector. . . ." (p. 143). Based on the evidence presented, I have no qualms about this assertion. But its larger implications are not addressed by Peterson, who draws overly sanguine conclusions regarding the "democratic" nature of the mining frontier and its generally "accommodating" and "benevolent" labor-management relations. Part of the difficulty is that Peterson's definition of "class" is obscure, though it appears that he views income and status as the most significant determinants of social stratification. (In fact, the terms "class" and "status" are used synonymously in the chapter on "Social Mobility on the Mining Frontier.") These mining entrepreneurs may have come from modest social origins, but the point is that they soon transcended these class origins and acquired a position of economic dominance closely resembling that of more wealthy business elites elsewhere. They thus helped create a new economic and social reality in which the same principle was operative as in the more advanced industrial regions: namely, that ownership and control of the essential means of production dictate power relationships among classes. This is more significant, in my opinion, than whether some bonanza kings were harsh toward their workers and most were not.

Another limitation of Peterson's analysis is suggested by his omission of politics, which he seems to consider as being autonomous from economic activity. The "alliances" he discusses in Chapter Six are *business* alliances, largely between bonanza kings and technicians. By focusing almost solely on

managerial policies, Peterson may have missed a fine opportunity to demonstrate the ways in which this particular business elite manipulated the political system for its own ends.

### *Los Angeles: Biography of a City.*

Edited by John and La Ree Caughey. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. 509 pp. Cloth \$14.95, paper \$6.95.)

### *Brand Book XV.*

Edited by Anthony L. Lehman. (Los Angeles: The Westerners Corral, 1977. 247 pp. \$25.00.)

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*Reviewed by Andrew Rolle, author of California: A History (third edition, 1978) and Cleland Professor of History, Occidental College.*

Los Angeles—what is it? "Prototypical metropolis of the future," "Double-Dubuque," or "the retreat of all failures"? Sinclair Lewis and W. C. Fields, who held such acerbic opinions about "L.A.," were preceded and followed by so many other critics that W. W. Robinson wrote a book almost forty years ago entitled *What They Say About the Angels* (1942). The city's chroniclers have included professionally-trained historians and amateurs: Newmark, Willard, Carr, McGroarty, McWilliams, Nadeau, Dumke, Lillard, Fogelson, Weaver, and Shevsky. There have also been the more shallow debunkers, Lurie and Rand.

Is "L.A." "a group of suburbs in search of a city"? The expansion of its Balkanized outskirts from rancho past into the smog-bound present remains confusing to any one interpreter. The relationship of the important suburb called Hollywood (a sheep camp turned Shangri-la) to Southern California is still not understood. Hollywood is a state of mind as much as its parent, Los Angeles, is "The Nowhere City."

Here are two books by many authors centered upon this Lotus Land of the Far West which, along with its hinterland, has defied any one historian to produce a definitive history. The Caughey anthology (their second to date) represents the work of over one-hundred contributors. Some fifteen other enthusiasts put together the latest *Brand Book* of the Westerners' Los Angeles "corral."



The essays in this latter volume are of desirable quality, especially those by its scholar-contributors. Among these are the writings of two women professionals, Gloria Ricci Lothrop and Jo Beth Jacobs. They are joined by Ray Allen Billington, who writes here about one of his favorite topics, Frederick Jackson Turner. Notable also is the excellent piece by Tom McNeill about the artist Duncan Gleason and Abraham Hoffman's work on the Owens Valley aqueduct. Other essays (that of Richard F. Pourade, for example) require documentation via footnoting. Like *festschriften*, designed to honor specific persons, these *Brand Books* published by various "corrals" throughout the American West are rather miscellaneous and without much sense of organization

or theme. They are often the work of local history buffs. This particular publication, however, appears to transcend the minutiae that clog the work of the undisciplined amateur; the result is a hearty little volume that ranges more widely than the Caughey anthology.

The organization of the hundred-plus essays in *Los Angeles: Biography of a City* proved difficult for its editors to unify. The development of the city has, in large measure, been that of Southern California. Its complex growth in population, as well as in economic and political power, has given Los Angeles the character of a city-state, one that is geographically larger than that of whole countries and of some American states. This anthology sets itself the task of encompassing



*The recreational possibilities of the Southern California shoreline lured countless landlocked Americans westward to the Los Angeles basin.*



this panoramic development from the Indian origins into the present and future. The editors (who have become California's most practiced "anthologizers") interweave a commentary that holds together the almost two hundred years of history which the book reflects. La Ree Caughey herself has contributed an original essay entitled "The Long Beach Earthquake." One can also find in the book some poetry about the San Gabriel Mountains written by Robinson Jeffers (as a result of hikes taken when he was a student at Occidental College), and miscellaneous essays on the real estate boom of 1887, the health rush to Southern California, and a description of the Watts Towers.

Behind all this scenery there remains a megalopolis whose original cultural shallowness and farm-born orthodoxy gave way to a baffling and powerful new status born of twentieth-century prosperity. Both of these explanatory volumes are contributions, beyond the level of fact-gathering, toward the future model history of Southern California that may one day emerge.

*Defending Eden: New Mexican Pioneers in Southern California, 1830-1890.*

By Joyce Carter Vickery. (Riverside: Department of History, University of California, Riverside, and the Riverside Museum Press, 1977. x, 130 pp. \$5.36.)

*Reviewed by Leonard Pitt, Professor of History, California State University, Northridge, and author of We Americans: A Topical History of the United States.*

This work is not a full-blown monograph, but, rather, a curator's interpretation of her artifacts. It grew out of an exhibit at the Riverside Municipal Museum concerning a small but distinctive area of the San Bernardino Valley. Still, *Defending Eden* is far more than a museum brochure; it is a valuable foray into community and ethnic history.

The place described here is San Salvador—comprising the villages of Agua Mansa and La Placita—which straddled the Santa Ana River north of Riverside in the late Mexican and early Yankee eras. In its heyday around 1860, San Salvador held 600 or so inhabitants.

What made San Salvador distinctive is that most of its inhabitants were *Genizaros* who hailed from Santa Fe, New

Mexico. The *Genizaros* were Hispanicized Pueblo Indians (and a few Comanches) who, because of their long association with the Spaniards and Mexicans, could no longer live in their traditional Native American communities. Weary of battling neighboring Indians and scrubbing on poorly watered farm land, they decided to move to California. The mastermind of the move seems to have been Lorenzo Trujillo, who in 1843 organized a trek along the Old Spanish Trail from Santa Fe through Cajon Pass and into the San Bernardino region. There the New Mexicans arranged a shrewd deal with members of the Lugo family and B. D. Wilson whereby they received land in exchange for a promise to protect the valley from Indian and other marauders who periodically swept through the ranchos to steal cattle and other property.

Although on more than one occasion they had to redeem their pledge to battle interlopers, they settled into a quiet daily existence based chiefly on farming and ranching. They worked their land partly on a communal basis, which was rare in Southern California. They became well known locally for their "belief in the values of personal responsibility, business initiative, hospitality, and courage, combined with a strong loyalty to family and Church." Also scattered among them were Anglo-American, French, Danish, and Sonoran Mexican settlers.

Starting in the 1860's, their lives were marked by a series of natural and social disasters. In rapid succession they faced a raging flood, a small-pox epidemic, a two-year drought, costly land litigation, double-dealing by the Lugo family, thievery by Anglos, and the enforcement of a California fence law that sharply curtailed their cattle grazing activities. Through much of this they persevered, yet eventually their way of life was undermined.

The book is enhanced by a lucid writing style—as well as by photos, sketches, and maps. One map locates the place of origin of the New Mexicans as well as their place of settlement, while another depicts some of the main landmarks of La Placita and Agua Mansa as they appeared in 1900. A weakness, though, is the absence of a map showing in detail the location of San Salvador in relation to today's Riverside and Colton.

The author supplies footnotes and bibliography and "A Note on Sources for Future Research." She demurs that her list of works is incomplete, yet it is a fair guess that she mentions or uses most if not all of the extant materials on San Salvador.



*This California surveyor, R. C. Matthewson of San Francisco, was issued a patent in 1858 for his transit instrument which measured horizontal angles.*

Vickery's work takes its place alongside the recent dissertations by Richard Griswold del Castillo concerning the Chicano barrio of Los Angeles in the nineteenth century and that of Albert Camarillo concerning the barrio of Santa Barbara. These and other works illuminate the processes of culture conflict, acculturation, and ethnic survival that greatly affected the Spanish speaking at the end of the pastoral and the beginning of the urban-industrial era. From this we may conclude that the field of ethnic and community studies concerning Spanish-speaking Californians is in a healthy condition.

### *Chaining the Land. A History of Surveying in California.*

By François D. Uzes. (Sacramento: Landmark Enterprises, 1977. 131 pages. \$17.50.)

*Reviewed by Curtis M. Brown, licensed land surveyor, now retired, who has written many articles and several books on boundary control and location.*

François D. Uzes' book, *Chaining the Land*, digs deeply into the major land surveys occurring in California, including the people, the instruments available, and the quality of the work. Land surveyors depend upon a particular segment of history, more so than other professions, in the performance of their calling. According to common law, the resurveyor must relocate property lines as nearly as possible in the position as marked by the original surveyor. In making retrace-ment surveys, the old axiom "retracing the footsteps of the original surveyor" can best be done with knowledge of the original surveyor, his abilities, instruments, hardships, dedication, reputation, and the directions under which he worked. Not all original surveys were honestly performed. Cognizance of fraudulent public land surveys helps the surveyor in knowing which corners may never have been set.

The first chapter describes many of the instruments available during the time most of the early boundary surveys of California were made. The research is comprehensive, the illustrations excellent, and the comments on attainable accuracy disclose wisdom in surveying technology. Chapter two on early surveys introduces a few examples of land sur-



veys occurring in major populated areas. Chapter three on state boundaries reviews the history of the various surveys of California's boundaries (Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, and Mexico) and discloses some errors occurring in them. The Nevada-California boundary has been in dispute for some time, and, at the present, California has petitioned the federal supreme court to establish the line. Persons interested in the issues in the case will find that this book has a wealth of factual background information on the early Von Schmidt and other surveys, with errors disclosed.

Chapter four on surveys of state-owned wetlands includes tidelands, swamp and overflow lands, and river beds, along with a description of the difficulty of locating these migratory



boundaries. A chapter on federal land surveys is very brief, and one on fraudulent surveys exposes the land grabbing of the so-called Benson Syndicate. The naming of the Benson surveyors and the location of the fictitious surveys is particularly beneficial to licensed land surveyors. A final chapter pertains to surveyor licensing laws. The remainder of the book (102 pages) is devoted to appendices containing related factual information, such as a list of all licensed land surveyors between 1893 and 1930, special instructions issued by the U.S. Surveyor General to deputies, circulars to county surveyors, notes on California boundaries, and the testing of instruments.

Mr. Uzes is the head of the State Boundary Determination Unit of the California State Lands Division. He has testified in many court cases and is well qualified by his knowledge to be historically accurate. Bibliographies at the end of each chapter contain the sources of information. The book is recommended reading for those practicing land surveying and those historians wanting to know about the source of the state's land titles.

### *Collecting Local History.*

By Bay Area Reference Center, San Francisco Public Library.  
(San Francisco: San Francisco Public Library, 1977. 40 pp.  
Free.)

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*Reviewed by Daniel E. Weinberg, Associate Professor of History, San Diego State University.*

The goal of the Bay Area Reference Center's workshop held on March 16 and 17, 1977, an event which was funded by the United States Office of Education, was to "provide information that would help librarians in Northern California understand the processes involved in collecting local history and oral history." The emphases of the papers presented at the conference and collected in this booklet are: the character and historical value of ephemera, newspapers, and oral resources; preservation and organization of archive-type materials; and selected local history collections. The nine appendices included in the publication range in character from sample catalogue forms to bibliography on oral history and the care of photographs to a selective guide for collect-

ing and research in local history. Apparently transcribed from tapes of the speeches, it is unedited and printed by mimeograph off stencils.

While the workshop's organizers may have succeeded in showing those attending "how-to-do-it," anyone reading the proceedings will find little help in the very brief presentations by the source persons. The booklet's best sections are the keynote address by Richard H. Dillon, Librarian of the Sutro Library, and the appendices. Dillon's remarks extended the significance of local history beyond its traditional parochial limits. His concerns for selectivity, the definition of this kind of local study, and its relationship to understanding the development of American society generally need to become those of librarians and researchers alike. The BARC would have done well to send his speech in advance to the other participants.

The value of these proceedings is itself as local history. Part of the revived national interest in community and genealogical history, it documents the Bay Area's efforts to communicate the importance of local history collecting and study. The workshop's speakers presented information that, by now, ought to have been very familiar to the audience. Those looking for new or innovative ideas will be disappointed. Nevertheless, the commitment to upgrade local history is clear and is a worthwhile discovery about the growth of local history in the Bay Area.

All the photographs are from the CHS Library.



# California Check List

By Joan Alpert

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1977-78) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

- Adams, Ramon F. *The Language of the Railroad*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press. \$9.95 + 40¢. Publisher, 1005 Asp Avenue, Norman 73019.
- Aiello, George and Jo Ann. *The Land of Glittering Dreams*. Photographs. Authors, P. O. Box 23593, Pleasant Hill 94523.
- Anderson, George E., W. H. Ellison and Robert F. Heizer. *Treaty Making and Treaty Rejection by the Federal Government in California, 1850-1852*. Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1977. 124 pp. \$5.95. Publisher, P. O. Box 1366, Socorro, 87801.
- Baur, John E. *Growing Up With California: A History of California's Children*. Los Angeles: Will Kramer, 1978. Publisher, 3111 Kelton Ave., Los Angeles 90034.
- Bean, Walton. *California: An Interpretive History*. 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978. 501 pp.
- Beard, Yolande S. *The Wappo: A Report*. St. Helena: By the author, 1977. 79 pp.
- Benhard, Hans and Colleen Redpath. *Valley Profiles: A Photographic Essay on the Livermore Valley of California*. Limited ed. Livermore: Old October Book Publishers, 1977. 72 pp. \$16.50.
- Benson, Robert. *Great Winemakers of California: Conversations With Robert Benson*. Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1977. 303 pp.
- Blessing, Patrick Joseph. *West Among Strangers: Irish Migration to California, 1850 to 1880*. 1977.
- Brett, Bill. *The Stolen Steers: A Tale of the Big Thicket*. Texas A & M University Press, 1977. 116 pp. \$6.75. Holmes Book Company, P. O. Box 858, Oakland 94604.
- Brooks, George R. *The Southwest Expedition of Jedediah S. Smith: His Personal Account of the Journey to California, 1826-1827*. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clarke Co., 1977. 259 pp. \$24.50. Publisher, Box 230, Glendale 91209.
- Clewlow, C. William (ed.). *Four Rock Art Studies*. Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1978. 108 pp. \$5.95. Publisher, P. O. Box 1366, Socorro 87801.
- Clough, F. S. *The House at Fifth and Salem*. Chico: Quad-co Printing, 1978. 116 pp. \$7.50. Author, 197 W. Trinity Road, Glen Ellen 95442.
- Cohan, Tony and Gordon Bean (eds.). *Outlaw Visions*. Los Angeles: Acrobat Books, 1977. 192 pp.
- Cronkhite, Daniel. *Death Valley's Victims: A Descriptive Chronology, 1849-1977*. Sagebrush Press, 1977. 54 pp. \$15.75. Holmes Book Company, Oakland 94604.
- Delehanty, Randolph. *Victorian Sampler: A Walk in Pacific Heights and the Haas Lilienthal House*. San Francisco: The Foundation for San Francisco's Architectural Heritage, 1978.
- Delgado, James P. and Christopher C. Wade. *How California Adobes Were Built in the 1830's: A Simple Guide to a Lost Art*. San Jose: 1978. 9 pp. \$2.00. Authors, 2835 Van Ness Ave., #3, San Francisco 94109.
- DeMers, Donald O. *Santa Clara Valley: Images of the Past*. San Jose: San Jose Historical Museum Association, 1977.
- Dillon, Richard H. *The Hatchet Men: San Francisco's Brotherhood of Blood*. Comstock Editions, 1977. 270 pp. \$2.50. Holmes Book Company, P. O. Box 858, Oakland 94604.
- Dwinelle, John W. *The Colonial History of San Francisco*. Reprint of 1867 edition. Kentfield: Ross Valley Book Co., 1978. 398 pp. \$10.00. Publisher, P. O. Box 415, Kentfield 94904.
- Easton, Robert. *Guns, Gold and Caravans: The Extraordinary Life and Times of Fred Meyer Schroder . . .* Capra Press, 1978. 256 pp. \$11.95. Robert Sheldon, (805) 966-4590.
- Engels, Albert. *Gold Mines of Southern California*. Denver, Colo.: Argonaut Enterprises, 1977. 200 pp.
- Fischer, Christiana (ed.). *Let Them Speak for Themselves: Women in the American West, 1849-1900*. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1977. 346 pp. \$15.00.
- Fisher, Raymond H. *Bering's Voyages: Whither and Why*. Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 1978. 230 pp. \$17.95. Publisher, Seattle 98105.
- Ford, Robert S. *Red Trains in the East Bay: The History of the Southern Pacific Transbay Train and Ferry System*. Interurbans Publications, 1977. 351 pp.
- Greenhill, Basil. *James Cook: The Opening of the Pacific*. Palo Alto: Pendragon House,



- Inc., 1978. 32 pp. \$2.50. Publisher, 2595 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto 94303.
- Hardy, Robert William Hale. *Travels in the Interior of Mexico in 1825, 1826, 1827 & 1828*. Reprint of 1829 edition. Glorieta, New Mexico: The Rio Grande Press, 1977. 557 pp.
- Heizer, Robert F. *Handbook of North American Indians: Vol. 8, California*. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978. 800 pp. \$13.50. Stock No. 047-000-00347. U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. 20402.
- The History of Pomona College, 1887-1969*. Claremont: Pomona College, 1977. 614 pp.
- Hoskin, Beryl Margaret, Doreen van Assenderp Cohen and Alice Ehlen Whistler. *The California Experience*. Sacramento: California Library Association, 1977. \$30.00 + tax. Publisher, 717 K St., Suite 300, Sacramento 95814.
- Hudson, Travis, and Ernest Underhay. *Crystals in the Sky: An Intellectual Odyssey Involving Chumash Astronomy and Rock Art*. Socorro, New Mexico: Ballena Press, 1978. 163 pp. \$8.95. Publisher, P. O. Box 1366, Socorro 87801.
- Hunter, Jim. *Offbeat Baja*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1977. 156 pp.
- Issei Christians: *Selected Interviews From the Issei Oral History Project*. The Sierra Mission Area, Synod of the Pacific, United Presbyterian Church, 1977. Argus Books, 2741 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento 95818.
- King, David C. et al. *Windows on California*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978. 80 pp. With Teachers Guide.
- Levine, Bernard R. *Knifemakers of Old San Francisco*. San Francisco: Badger Books, 1978. \$12.95 + tax. Publisher, P. O. Box 40336, San Francisco 94140.
- MacGregor, Bruce A. and Ted Benson. *Portrait of a Silver Lady: The Train They Called the California Zephyr*. Boulder, Colo.: Pruett Publishing Co., 1977. 357 pp.
- Maefau, Mila. *The Samoan Churches in Southern California: Their Needs, Development and Search for Identity*. 1977. 91 pp.
- Martin, Mildred Crowl. *Chinatown's Angry Angel: The Story of Donaldina Cameron*. Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1977. 308 pp.
- Martin, Wallace E. *Waterfront Yarns of Humboldt Bay From the Era of Wooden Ships to Iron Men*. Eureka: Lambert & McKeehan, 1977. 26 pp.
- Mathes, W. Michael. *Cattle Brands of Baja California Sur, 1809-1885*. Los Angeles: Archivo Historico de Baja California Sur. In English and Spanish. 78 pp. \$18.00. Dawson's Book Shop, 535 N. Larchmont Blvd., Los Angeles 90004.
- Mathes, W. Michael. *The Mission of Baja California, 1683-1849: An Historical Photographic Survey*. La Paz, Baja California Sur: Editorial Aristos S. A. de C. V., 1977. 209 pp. Publisher, Heroes de la Independencia, 945 Norte, La Paz, Baja California Sur.
- Maunder, Elwood Rondeau. *Memoirs of a Pioneering Forester in the West: An Interview With Robie M. Evans, Conducted by Elwood R. Maunder*. Santa Cruz: Forest History Society, 1977. 48 pp.
- Merenbach, Nathan. *Grampa: The Autobiography of Nathan Merenbach*. San Francisco: Artel Graphic Arts, 1977. 178 pp. \$8.65.
- Judah L. Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley 94705.
- Modell, John. *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942*. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1977. 201 pp. \$10.00.
- Murdock, Dick. *Port Costa, 1879-1941: A Saga of Sails, Sacks and Rails*. Port Costa: Murdock-Endom Pubs., 1977. 40 pp.
- Odens, Peter. *The Desert's Edge*. Benson, Arizona: Border-Mountain Press, 1977. 105 pp.
- Of Towers and Trees and Towering Men: A Pictorial History of the Christian Communities of the Sonoma Coast*. Text by Don Nivens. Photos by Steve Crouch. South Hackensack, New Jersey: Ecclesiastical Color Publishers, 1969. 36 pp. Saint Peter's Church, 29477 Healdsburg Avenue, Cloverdale.
- Outland, Charles F. *Man-Made Disaster: The Story of St. Francis Dam*. Rev. ed. Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co. 275 pp. \$15.75. Publisher, Box 230, Glendale 91209.
- Peterson, Robert M. *A Case Study of a Northern California Indian Tribe: Cultural Change to 1860*. San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1977. 102 pp.
- Pourade, Richard F. *City of the Dream: The History of San Diego*. Vol. 7. La Jolla: Copley Books, 1977. 266 pp. \$19.50.
- Rather, Lois. *Henry George: Printer to Author*. Oakland: The Rather Press, 1978. 89 pp. \$20.00 + \$1.30. Publisher, 3200 Guido Street, Oakland 94602.
- Reed, Lester. *Old Time Cattlemen and Other Pioneers of the Anza-Borrego Area*. 2nd ed. Benson, Arizona: Border-Mountain Press, 1977. 147 pp.
- Rife, Joanne. *Where the Light Turns Gold: The Story of the Santa Inez Valley*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1977. 167 pp.
- Rogus, Spencer Lee. *The Stature of Early Southern California Indian Populations*. San Diego: Museum of Man, 1977. 27 pp.
- Shasky, Florian J. and Susan F. Riggs. *Letters to Elizabeth*. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1977. 120 pp. \$40.00 + tax. Publisher, 545 Sutter St., Room 202, San Francisco 94102.
- Spears, John R. *Illustrated Sketches of Death Valley and Other Borax Deserts of the Pacific Coast*. Reprint of 1892 edition. Sagebrush Press, 1977. 226 pp. \$17.95. Holmes Book Store, P. O. Box 858, Oakland 94604.
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- Time-Life Books (eds.). *The Mexican War*. Text by David Niven. Alexandria: Time-Life Books, 1978. 240 pp.
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- Wilkening, David Lester. *Political History of California State Legislative Reapportionment, 1849-1977*. 1977. 32 pp.





# I AM IVAN FEDOROFF

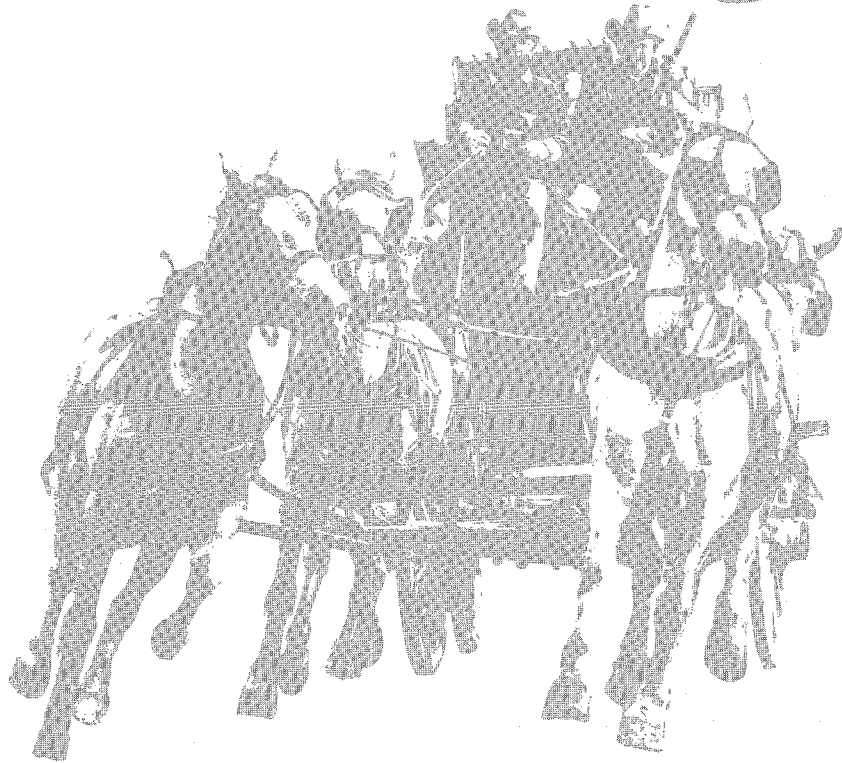
*First Printer of  
all the Russias!*

It is regrettable that the Dark Continent of the World is not Africa but Russia. ∞ Were it otherwise, the name of Ivan Fedoroff would be at least as well known in the bright new land of America as that of John Froben the Swiss, Laurens Janzoon the Dutchman, John Day the Englishman, Hans Gensfleisch (or Gutenberg) the German, Juan Pablos the Italian or Robert Estienne the Frenchman, who was my own contemporary and rival for printing honors in the 16th century. ∞ To be sure, these men were illustrious printers, and you should know them. But you should also know that Russian printers are second to none in the history of art, literature and civilization. ∞ I have the honor of being the first. I founded the first printing establishment in Moscow in 1565. My detractors were legion, however, and they forced me to flee to Lemberg, where I began all over again. ∞ For years I printed without cease and succeeded in building the foundation upon which the vast and wondrous structure of Russian printing later rose. ∞ But alas, I had no mind for money or the scurvy ways of business. To a venal money-lender I was forced to sacrifice all my books, my type, my tools, presses and equipment for the paltry sum of four hundred and eleven francs. And my last days were spent in Lemberg in the most abject and miserable poverty. I am, however, very grateful to those great twentieth-century typographers and typefounders, *Mackenzie-Harris Corp. of 460 Bryant Street, San Francisco*, for now bringing to you this enlightenment upon the subject of my memory.



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## THOSE POWERFUL YEARS

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**Joseph S. O'Flaherty**

Author of *An End and a Beginning: The South Coast and Los Angeles, 1850-1887*

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